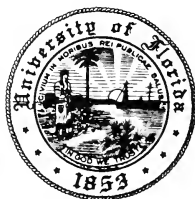


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AN ESSAY ON EPIC POETRY

AN ESSAY
ON
EPIC POETRY
(1782)

BY
WILLIAM HAYLEY

A FACSIMILE REPRODUCTION
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
SISTER M. CELESTE WILLIAMSON, SSJ

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA
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INTRODUCTION

William Hayley's *An Essay on Epic Poetry* was published June 22, 1782. Ostensibly a commentary in verse on the character and fortunes of the epic, the work goes far beyond the author's expressed intention and as "new" criticism makes some quite respectable contributions to the history of literary theory.

Curiously enough, Hayley wrote this serious and lengthy work at a time when many thoughtful readers were of the opinion that the epic in English was very close to its demise. After having been honored for countless generations as the most exalted and the most virile of all the "kinds," it had sunk by the latter part of the eighteenth century into an anemic languor—hardly able to hold its own against its rival in the narrative form, the sentimental novel. The reasons for this decline were many, but chief of them, Hayley believed, was "System" or the "Rules"—a code of principles by which epic poetry was to be corrected and disciplined by imitation of the ancients. The Rules governed such matters as fable and action, intention of moral instruction, unity, the probable, the marvelous, celestial machinery, appropriate heroes, and the like.

That some of these Rules rested on misinterpretation of the critical dicta of Aristotle, Cicero, Horace, and Longinus we now know; but for about a century the Rules and the critics who appealed to them as absolute authority constituted a force to be reckoned with. Hayley charged that the Rules, by curbing drastically the imagination and freedom of the poet, had drained the epic of its vitality and beauty, and, conversely, that they had drawn into the genre countless and long-since meaningless accretions of literary conventions and ornaments. Measured by the Rules, not even such favorite works as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* could qualify as true epics, although earlier ages had regarded them as such. Even Homer and Virgil became the subjects of closer scrutiny as the qualities of their epics were examined, compared, and reëxamined from various approaches to ascertain which of them ranked as the greater genius. After Addison's *Spectator* essays on Milton (Nos. 267-309), and under the growing influence of converts to Longinus, Milton was occasionally compared with Homer and Virgil, for an increasing number of critics felt that the sublime character of his *Paradise Lost* placed him without question in their company. No one else was accorded such promotion, however, and time seemed to bear out Bishop Warburton's observation in his *Dissertation on the Sixth Book of the Aeneid*, that with Homer, Virgil, and Milton, "the grand scene was closed, and all farther improvements of the Epic at an end" (see Hayley, p. 120). It can be seen, then, that any modern author ambitious of attempting an epic was soon faced with a dilemma: to write according to the Rules and deliberately produce a bloodless thing, or to write freely according to his wealth of imagination and warmth of passion and risk being refused epic

status at all. The modern author, under such conditions, quickly lost his fervor and ordinarily directed his creative genius to less demanding literary forms. It began to appear that the epic impulse, once so magnificent, would die out in England for lack of heroic authors. To rehabilitate the epic, to encourage new poets to resort to it, and to re-focus the image of the true critic, Hayley wrote *An Essay on Epic Poetry*.

At this juncture, it may be well to inquire about the man who presumed to try single-handed to alter the fate of an ancient literary genre which seemed already overwhelmed by mounting critical pressures. Who was Hayley? What preparation had he to warrant attempting such a task?

William Hayley (1745-1820) is today dismissed as a very minor writer who did his best work during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. This is a meager and colorless label for a man who, in Robert Southey's words, was "by grace of the public, king of the bards of Britain" in his day (See "Review of Hayley's Memoirs" in the *Quarterly Review*, XXXI [1825], 289). Although born to wealth and social position, he won fame as a hard-working professional man of letters. He was by turns poet, biographer, translator, playwright, and editor. He was also something of an artist, being particularly capable in miniature painting. He had been educated at Eton and Trinity Hall at Cambridge, but when he decided that Law was not his vocation, he left college without a degree and devoted himself to literature. He achieved his first pronounced success in poetry. His verse, particularly his Horatian epistles (of which *An Essay on Epic Poetry* is a good example), is controlled and carefully polished. Although some modern critics have thought him tamely didactic and without character, his contemporaries deemed him the true successor to Pope, worthy

to be offered the Laureateship upon the death of Thomas Warton in 1790. Hayley declined the honor, however, reportedly because of his strong Whig sympathies.

During his long life, he exhibited almost a genius for friendship, attracting to his estate at Eartham in Sussex (an early biographer, Lower, characterized it as another Tusculum), a host of people whose names ranked high in the world of society as well as in that of art and letters. He numbered George Romney, John Flaxman, John Howard, Edward Gibbon, George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont, and William Cowper among his closest friends. Although he himself chose to be remembered as the friend and biographer of Cowper (thus he identified himself in the subtitle of his *Memoirs*), posterity has preferred to link him almost exclusively with William Blake, whose patron and employer he was for about three years. Ironically, Blake himself, through his unkind epigrams, and his biographers, through their zeal to enhance Blake's reputation, have done less than justice to Hayley. Although the fame of many of Hayley's friends now completely overshadows his own, it was the reverse during his life, except for Gibbon and Romney. It is difficult today to realize how much of a power the name "Hayley" was—a power to open exclusive social circles in London and Bath; to incite alert literary reviewers for periodicals to vie with one another in acclaiming his newest work; and to assist young writers and artists to professional success as much by their association with him as by the lavish favors and funds of his old-fashioned patronage. Thus it can be seen that when Hayley took up the cause of the epic in *An Essay on Epic Poetry*, he had a numerous and enthusiastic audience of recognized taste, already won over to grant him a hearing.

It should be understood, however, that Hayley was not merely a fashionable poet; he was a scholar. Of most evident advantage to him was his singularly rich background, due in great part to an unflagging interest in languages. His linguistic studies ranged through Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and German, and left their mark on all his mature work, as one can see in *An Essay on Epic Poetry*. He was acutely aware of the treasures of wisdom and art at hand in the languages of other peoples and of other times, and to the end of his life he tried to interest others in them. He pursued his studies by literally shopping around the world for rare books and manuscripts through the good offices of his booksellers, of his friends, and even of members of the diplomatic corps. This penchant for languages and, of course, the resources of his magnificent library gave Hayley some distinct advantages, as he turned his attention to literary history and criticism. One was that his first-hand familiarity with epics of antiquity, and especially with those in medieval Latin and early vernaculars, lent authority to his opinions and comments, particularly in his case against the Rules. Another was that he was able to bring together in one place an assortment of pronouncements on writers, ancient or modern, and demonstrate the validity of his conclusions. This he did with such depth of erudition that it was the hallmark by which even his anonymous works were identified. Finally, his translations attracted considerable support for his epic theories, for his readers could explore new concepts of the epic (new, at least, to English readers) by means of the lengthy sections of Dante's *Inferno* and Ercilla's *La Araucana* which Hayley had inserted into the Notes to Epistle III of the *Epic Poetry*. These translations, together with some short poems and biographical sketches of

Dante, Petrarch, Camoens, and others are especially remarked here because they have a place in the history of the literature of translation which has largely gone unrecognized in eighteenth-century studies. Yet Robert Southey found them so significant in attracting young scholars to the study of romance languages, and so important to the inspiration of English romantic writers, that he did not hesitate to say, "A greater effect was produced upon the rising generation of scholars, by the Notes to his Essay on Epic Poetry, than by any other contemporary work, the Relics of Ancient Poetry alone excepted" (See *Ibid.*, XXXI, 283).

The experience which ultimately proved to be of immediate and practical value to the *Epic Poetry* was that of having, himself, written an epic, "The Charter" (although it was left unfinished), for the insights acquired in coping with the aesthetic and technical problems of the genre he was to explore played a large part in his effectiveness as a critic.

An Essay on Epic Poetry combines several literary traditions, but literary history in verse (here, one of the last and most elaborate of its kind) and literary criticism in Horatian epistles are the most significant. The transitional character of the work is immediately apparent, for even as Hayley proposes to liberate the modern epic poet from "oppressive awe" of the neoclassical Rules and to guide him through the maze of conflicting theories back to the sources of the epic, he is writing in heroic couplets, skillfully wrought. He argues that that epic which is representative of the spirit and ideals of the civilization that gave it birth is a better epic than one constructed according to a set of specifications—specifications which evolved in entirely different conditions of history and literature and have since become outmoded. Yet Hayley is no iconoclast.

He gives the classical writers, Homer, Virgil, Apollonius of Rhodes, and Lucan, their place of honor and affection, even while admitting to their august company writers of both modern times and romantic tendencies. Then, through both verse and notes, he moves the course of the epic out of antiquity, across the no-man's-land of medieval Latin heroic poetry of heterogeneous epic characteristics and national affiliations, into modern times. Not only does he indicate what he believes to be the most noteworthy of the vernacular epics, he also attempts to supply some critical apparatus for discussing them. Through such writers as Dante, Ariosto, Tasso, Boileau, Chaucer, Spenser, and Pope, Hayley widens the scope of the epic and approves as proper epic material history, satire, religion, and romantic love—all of which were deemed unsuitable according to the Rules. He assumes other innovations also: the texture of the verse may change from Milton's to Butler's; there may be double or triple rhyme, or no rhyme at all; form may be anything from blank verse, to couplets, to various stanza patterns. Finally, he admits unity of design to be as valid as unity of action.

The passage from classical to romantic attitudes and interests is smoothly maneuvered. Hayley argues that even within the group of epic writers of acknowledged classical orthodoxy there is more freedom in the matter of fable and action, in the character of the hero, and in the force of passion than the comparatively recent neoclassical critics had been willing to grant. He implies that the old, free-flowing epic impulse, first manifested in ancient times, has been choked off by prevailing conditions of oppression, critical as well as political, and has trickled into literary history. However, through the vernacular epics of other nations, it has broken out afresh and surges with

new life, in newer modes, colored by the character of the people among whom it is found. It is only logical, Hayley thinks, that a similar renaissance could be brought about in the English epic.

As he turns his regard toward the epic of the future, he has some strong convictions about directions it ought to take. One, for example, is toward more convincing character drawing, and he suggests that the modern epic writer would do well to study Nature—man himself—to probe the complexities of his mind and heart. Another direction, and one linked with character delineation, is toward a more meaningful type of action, and hence toward more closely-knit structure of the epic as a whole. He reasons that shearing away the entire convention of celestial machinery will produce a stronger narrative, for action will be more true to life and more satisfying to the reader when it is motivated by the characters themselves in their reaction to circumstances and to each other, rather than by the interference of supernatural beings. He also recommends another: raising women from minor figures, sometimes allegorical, to participation in the epic action as principal characters; this is allowed even in the ancients, as with Helen and Medea. Still another direction—and this Hayley regards as vital to the new epic—is the expression of the national spirit. The glory of England and proper homage to her heroic sons are the burden of many of his lines in *An Essay on Epic Poetry*. Much of this sentiment, of course, may have been only conformity to the tradition of *domestica facta* so ingrained in contemporary writers, but his emphasis on this point is particularly timely, in view of the war with the American Colonies then in progress.

With this, Hayley concludes his recommendations for improving the modern verse epic. It is ironic that those recom-

mentations appeared beautifully developed, not in the epic, but in the historical novel of the next century, in the Waverley novels of Sir Walter Scott.

An Essay on Epic Poetry reveals Hayley's absorption in another matter, for complexities of a historical nature color his literary purposes. The reader need not proceed very far into the first epistle before he realizes that, in spite of the literary character and message of the work, its controlling idea is freedom. But it is a many-faceted freedom, and the fact that Hayley wrote under the shadow of the war with the American Colonies and of the political and social conflicts at home soon to culminate in the fall of Lord North's ministry, made him, in a sense, vulnerable to suspicion of revolutionary tendencies. Even the man he chose to address as his poem's patron, Rev. Mr. William Mason, was the contemporary poet most involved in problems of freedom, particularly in parliamentary reform, but more deeply and dangerously than Hayley could know.

For Hayley, the cause of the epic and the cause of freedom were allied, as they were in many cultivated minds of the 1770's and 1780's. Through Lucan, the epic had become the symbol of ancient republican ideals and aspirations, and eventually a vehicle of protest against oppression. With *An Essay on Epic Poetry*, Hayley advances the old concept to a new level, and with Parnassian-like perspective views man's continuing struggle for freedom of many kinds as epic in character. As an artist, he puts his work in a larger context than that usually adverted to by revolutionists, by positing freedom as the climate in which alone literature can thrive. He sees the necessity for freedom on various levels of reference: political freedom, the need for which is all around him and to which he can refer only covertly by ancient parallels because of the war

hysteria; religious freedom, for the Gordon Riots of June 2-4, 1780, which he witnessed, are still fresh in his mind; freedom from critical tyranny in the form of System or Rules; freedom from poverty; finally, freedom from the evils attendant upon prejudice. Thus it can be seen that Hayley is committing himself to a course of protest—political, religious, aesthetic, and social; and in this he is a true revolutionist, but in a wider connotation than most of his contemporaries were aware of.

Exactly what Hayley's understanding of the term "freedom" was, is difficult to determine, for as the reader pursues his way through *An Essay on Epic Poetry*, he finds the concept varying slightly from epistle to epistle, according to the facet of freedom being explored in each. Certainly there are in it elements of hard, practical Whiggism as well as of transcendent faith in the constitutional liberties gained in the Glorious Revolution; but the ultimate source is an almost impelling desire for freedom (his "passion for freedom") which he found at hand, already fully developed, in his Greek and Latin masters. This in turn he intimately associates with the progress of Italian history; for Hayley, in his far-ranging medieval studies, has come to see the fight of the Italian city-states for freedom from tyranny as similar in principle to the struggles of the republics of Greece and Rome. This spirit of freedom he views as crossing into the literary expression of the peoples involved, and he accepts the major Italian epics as true epics, to be associated with their classical counterparts, and to be judged as representative of their own civilization, although it was a less heroic one.

Hayley regarded *An Essay on Epic Poetry* as undoubtedly his best work; certainly it best represents him as poet, critic, translator, and all-around scholar, for he never excelled the fine workmanship displayed in the quality of the verse, the sus-

tained elevation of tone, or the erudition of the notes. Moreover, within the framework of the epic, its development, and its renewal, he attempted some significant advances in literary theory. He made it his paramount aim to secure freedom as a climate in which an author could live and work and receive recognition. He was modern enough to perceive the emergence of a new mode of poetry and to approach it with an open mind, for he maintained that a poem was an artistic entity and that its own aesthetic needs should be considered before the demands of any hard and fast theory it was supposed to follow. He was also classicist enough and antiquarian enough to realize that the critical principles of centuries were basic to literature and learning, and should provide the foundation for any new venture.

The foregoing factors did not, however, make *An Essay on Epic Poetry* in itself "new" criticism. Neither did Hayley's admission of a whole group—Dante, Chaucer, Spenser, Pope, and others to the sacrosanct society of Homer, Virgil, and Milton; nor his acceptance of such unwonted themes as romantic love, humor, and history as the materials of which proper epics are made; nor even the principle of freedom of composition. These were matters of significance to the literary theory of his own time, it is true; but what caused the book to be "new" was the fact that Hayley made of it the medium through which he promulgated attitudes more progressive than those which are usually associated with the epic: a demand for greater freedom of spirit and breadth of vision; a reappraisal of the resources of older cultures, but with a view to applying them to the enrichment of future literature; a willingness to experiment with forms and techniques; a sympathy with the very effort of growth and process. Furthermore, he has very definitely associated his

book with the critical traditions of Lowth, Hurd, and Thomas Warton for, by his very sizable sections on Italian and Spanish literature in both the text and the notes, he too has extended the boundaries of literary awareness.

The modern reader sees Hayley's achievement with a perspective his contemporaries, however progressive, could not attain to, and it is now apparent that some of the critical principles which are manifested in *An Essay on Epic Poetry* are perhaps seminal, at least significant in the light of later development, and are hence quite respectable contributions to the history of literary theory. In general, the book is a piece of documentary evidence, for it records one aspect of the process of transition by which the age of sensibility passed into the age of romanticism. In particular, it records the elements of change which Hayley found already present in the epics of antiquity and increasingly insistent in later ones—all of which we now recognize as having hastened the demise of the old formal epic as the eighteenth century knew it. At the same time, it is a hopeful work; it looks forward to yet unexplored and inviting prospects of a reborn and more vital narrative genre.

SISTER M. CELESTE WILLIAMSON, SSJ

Mater Dei College
Ogdensburg, New York
July 7, 1967

A N
E S S A Y
O N
E P I C P O E T R Y;
I N F I V E E P I S T L E S
T O T H E R E V^D. M^R. M A S O N.
W I T H
N O T E S.

——— *Vatibus addere calcar*
Ut studio majore petant Helicon virentem. H O R.

B Y W I L L I A M H A Y L E Y, E s q.

L O N D O N:
P R I N T E D F O R J. D O D S L E Y, I N P A L L - M A L L.
M. DCC. LXXXII.

E P I S T L E

T H E F I R S T.

A R G U M E N T

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

Introduction.—Design of the Poem to remove prejudices which obstruct the cultivation of Epic writing.—Origin of Poetry.—Honors paid to its infancy.—Homer the first Poet remaining.—Difficulty of the question why he had no Successor in Greece.—Remark of a celebrated Writer, that as Criticism flourishes Poetry declines.—Defence of Critics.—Danger of a bigoted acquiescence in critical Systems—and of a Poet's criticising his own works.—Advantages of Friendship and Study of the higher Poets.

E P I S T L E I.

PERISH that critic pride, which oft has hurl'd
Its empty thunders o'er the Epic world ;
Which, eager to extend its mimic reign,
Would bind free Fancy in a servile chain ;
With papal rage the eye of Genius blind, 5
And bar the gates of Glory on the mind !

Such dark decrees have letter'd Bigots penn'd *,
Yet seiz'd that honor'd name, the Poet's Friend.
But Learning from her page their laws will blot ;
Scorn'd be their arrogance ! their name forgot ! 10
Th' indignant Bard, abhorring base controul,
Seeks the just Critic of congenial soul.
Say ! MASON, Judge and Master of the Lyre !
Harmonious Chief of Britain's living Choir,

* Ver. 7. See NOTE I.

Say! wilt Thou listen to his weaker strains, 15
 Who pants to range round Fancy's rich domains;
 To vindicate her empire, and disown
 Proud System, seated on her injur'd throne?
 Come! while thy Muse, contented with applause,
 Gives to her graceful song a little pause, 20
 Enjoying triumphs past; at leisure laid
 In thy sweet Garden's variegated shade,
 Or fondly hanging on some favorite Oak
 That Harp, whose notes the fate of Mona spoke,
 Strung by the sacred Druid's social band, 25
 And wisely trusted to thy kindred hand!
 Come! for thy liberal and ingenuous heart
 Can aid a Brother in this magic art;
 Let us, and Freedom be our guide, explore
 The highest province of poetic lore, 30
 Free the young Bard from that oppressive awe,
 Which feels Opinion's rule as Reason's law,
 And from his spirit bid vain fears depart,
 Of weaken'd Nature and exhausted Art!
 Phantoms! that literary spleen conceives! 35
 Dullness adopts, and Indolence believes!

While

While with advent'rous step we wind along
 Th' expansive regions of Heroic song,
 From different sources let our search explain
 Why few the Chieftains of this wide domain. 40

Haply, inspiriting poetic youth,
 Our verse may prove this animating truth,
 That Poesy's sublime, neglected field
 May still new laurels to Ambition yield ;
 Her Epic trumpet, in a modern hand, 45
 Still make the spirit glow, the heart expand.

Be such our doctrine ! our enlivening aim
 The Muse's honor, and our Country's fame !
 Thou first and fairest of the social Arts !
 Sovereign of liberal souls, and feeling hearts, 50

If, in devotion to thy heavenly charms,
 I clasp'd thy altar with my infant arms,
 For thee neglected the wide field of wealth,
 The toils of int'rest, and the sports of health,
 Enchanting Poesy ! that zeal repay 55

With powers to sing thy universal sway !
 To trace thy progress from thy distant birth,
 Heaven's pure descendant ! dear delight of Earth !

Charm

[6]

Charm of all regions ! to no age confin'd !
The prime ennobler of th' aspiring mind ! 60

Nor will thy dignity, sweet Power ! disdain
What Fiction utters in her idle strain,
Thy sportive Friend ! who, mocking solemn Truth,
Tells her fond tales of thy untutor'd youth.
As wrong'd Latona (so her tale begins) 65

To Delphos travell'd with her youthful twins ;
Th' envenom'd Python, with terrific sway,
Cross'd the fair Goddess in her destin'd way :
The heavenly parent, in the wild alarm,
Her little Dian in her anxious arm, 70

High on a stone, which she in terror trod,
Cried to her filial guard, the Archer God,
Bidding with force, that spoke the Mother's heart,
Her young Apollo launch his ready dart ;
In measur'd sounds her rapid mandate flow'd, 75
The first foundation of the future Ode !

Thus, at their banquets, fabling Greeks rehearse *
The fancied origin of sacred Verse :

* Ver. 77. See NOTE II.

And though cold Reason may with scorn assail,
 Or turn contemptuous from their simple tale, 80
 Yet, Poesy ! thy sister Art may stoop
 From this weak sketch to paint th' impassion'd group.
 Though taste refin'd to modern Verse deny
 The hacknied pageants of the Pagan sky,
 Their sinking radiance still the Canvass warms, 85
 Painting still glories in their graceful forms ;
 Nor canst thou envy, if the world agree
 To grant thy Sister claims denied to thee ;
 For thee, the happier Art ! the elder-born !
 Superior rights and dearer charms adorn : 90
 Confin'd she catches, with observance keen,
 Her single moment of the changeful scene ;
 But thou, endu'd with energy sublime,
 Unquestion'd arbiter of space and time !
 Canst join the distant, the unknown create, 95
 And, while Existence yields thee all her state,
 On the astonish'd mind profusely pour
 Myriads of forms, that Fancy must adore.
 Yet of thy boundless power the dearest part
 Is firm possession of the feeling Heart : 100

No progeny of Chance, by Labor taught,
 No flow-form'd creature of scholastic thought,
 The child of Passion thou ! thy lyre she strung,
 To her parental notes she tun'd thy tongue ;
 Gave thee her boldest swell, her softest tone, 105
 And made the compass of her voice thy own.

To Admiration, source of joy refin'd !
 Chaste, lovely mover of the simple mind !
 To her, though sceptics, in their pride, declaim,
 With many an insult, on her injur'd name ; 110
 To her, sweet Poesy ! we owe thy birth,
 Thou first encomiast of the fruitful Earth !
 By her inspir'd, the earliest mortal found
 The ear-delighting charm of measur'd sound ;
 He hail'd the Maker of a world so fair, 115
 And the first accent of his song was prayer.
 O, most attractive of those airy Powers,
 Who most illuminate Man's chequer'd hours !
 Is there an Art, in all the group divine,
 Whose dawn of Being must not yield to thine ? 120
 Religion's self, whose provident controul
 Takes from fierce Man his anarchy of soul,

She o'er thy youth with fond affection hung,
 And borrow'd music from thy infant tongue.
 Law, sterner Law, whose potent voice imprest 125
 Severest terror on the human breast,
 With thy fresh flow'rs her awful figure crown'd,
 And spoke her mandate in thy softer sound.
 E'en cold Philosophy, whom later days
 Saw thy mean rival, envious of thy praise; 130
 Who clos'd against thee her ungrateful arms,
 And urg'd her Plato to defame thy charms;
 She from thy childhood gain'd no fruitless aid,
 From thee she learnt her talent to persuade.
 Gay Nature view'd thee with a smiling glance, 135
 The Graces round thee fram'd the frolic dance:
 And well might festive Joy thy favor court;
 Thy song turn'd strife to peace, and toil to sport.
 Exhausted Vigor at thy voice reviv'd,
 And Mirth from thee her dearest charm deriv'd. 140
 Triumphant Love, in thy alliance blest,
 Enlarg'd his empire o'er the gentle breast;
 His torch assum'd new lustre from thy breath,
 And his clear flame defied the clouds of death.

But of the splendid train, who felt thy sway, 145
Or drew existence from thy vital ray,
Glory, with fondest zeal, proclaim'd thy might,
And hail'd thee victor of oblivious Night.

Her martial trumpet to thy hand she gave,
At once to quicken, and reward the Brave: 150
It sounds—his blood the kindling Hero pays,
A cheap and ready price for thy eternal praise!
Tho' selfish Fear th' immortal strain deride,
And mock the Warrior's wish as frantic pride!

Ye gallant, hapless Dead of distant time, 155
Whose fame has perish'd unembalm'd in rhyme,
As thro' the desert air your ashes fly,
In Fancy's ear the nameless atoms cry,
“ To us, unhappy! cruel Fates refuse
“ The well-earn'd record of th' applauding Muse.” 160

Blest are those Chiefs, who, blazon'd on her roll,
Still waken virtue in each kindred soul;
Their bright existence still on earth prolong,
And shine for ever in the deathless song.
Yet oft Oblivion, in a treacherous shade, 165
Has sunk the tuneful rites to Valor paid;

Her

Her palsied lips refusing to rehearse
The sacred, old, traditionary verse.

As well the curious eye, with keen desire,
Might hope to catch that spark of vital fire, 170
Which first thro' Chaos shot a sudden light,
And quicken'd Nature in its transient flight ;
As the fond ear to catch the fleeting note,
Which on the ravish'd air was heard to float,
When first the Muse her Epic strain began, 175
And every list'ning Chief grew more than Man.

But, as the Ruler of the new born day
From Chaos rose, in glory's rich array ;
So from deep shades, impenetrably strong,
That shroud the darken'd world of antient song, 180
Bright HOMER bursts, magnificently clear,
The solar Lord of that poetic sphere ;
Before whose blaze, in wide luxuriance spread,
Each Grecian Star hides his diminish'd head ;
Whose beams departed yet enchant the sight, 185
In Latium's softer, chaste, reflected light.

Say ye ! whose curious philosophic eye
Searches the depth where Nature's secrets lie ;

Ye, who can tell, how her capricious fit
 Directs the flow and ebb of human wit, 190
 And why, obedient to her quick command,
 Spring-tides of Genius now enrich her fav'rite land,
 Now sink, by her to different climes assign'd,
 And only leave some worthless weeds behind !
 Say ! why in Greece, unrival'd and alone, 195
 The Sovereign Poet grac'd his Epic throne ?
 Why did the realm that echoed his renown,
 Produce no kindred heir to claim his crown ?
 If, as the liberal mind delights to think,
 Fancy's rich flow'rs their vital essence drink 200
 From Liberty's pure streams, that largely roll
 Their quick'ning virtue thro' the Poet's soul ;
 Why, in the period when this Friend of Earth
 Made Greece the model of heroic worth,
 And saw her votaries act, beneath her sway, 205
 Scenes more sublime than Fiction can display,
 Why did the Epic Muse's silent lyre *
 Shrink from those feats that summon'd all her fire ?
 Or if, as courtly Theorists maintain,
 The Muses revel in a Monarch's reign ; 210

* Ver. 207. See NOTE III.

Why,

Why, when young Ammon's soul, athirst for fame,
 Call'd every Art to celebrate his name ;
 When ready Painting, at his sovereign nod,
 With awful thunder arm'd this mimic God ;
 Why did coy Poesy, tho' fondly woo'd, 215
 Refuse that dearer smile for which he sued,
 And see him shed, in martial Honor's bloom,
 The tear of envy on Achilles' tomb ?

In vain would Reason those nice questions solve,
 Which the fine play of mental powers involve : 220
 In Bards of ancient time, with genius fraught,
 What mind can trace how thought engender'd thought,
 How little hints awak'd the large design,
 And subtle Fancy spun her variegated line ?
 Yet sober Critics, of no vulgar note, 225
 But such as Learning's sons are proud to quote,
 The progress of Homeric verse explain,
 As if their souls had lodg'd in Homer's brain.
 Laughs not the spirit of poetic frame,
 However slightly warm'd by Fancy's flame, 230
 When grave Bossu by System's studied laws *
 The Grecian Bard's ideal picture draws,

* Ver. 231. See NOTE IV.

And

And wifely tells us, that his Song arose
 As the good Parson's quiet Sermon grows ;
 Who, while his easy thoughts no pressure find 235
 From hosts of images that croud the mind,
 First calmly fettle on some moral text,
 Then creeps—from one division—to the next ?
 Nor, if poetic minds more slowly drudge
 Thro' the cold comments of this Gallic judge, 240
 Will their indignant spirit less deride
 That subtle Pedant's more presumptive pride,
 Whose bloated page, with arrogance replete,
 Imputes to VIRGIL his own dark conceit : *
 And from the tortur'd Poet dares to draw 245
 That latent sense, which HORACE never saw ;
 Which, if on solid proof more strongly built,
 Must brand the injur'd Bard with impious guilt.

While such Dictators their vain efforts waste
 In the dark visions of distemper'd Taste, 250
 Let us that pleasing, happier light pursue,
 Which beams benignant from the milder few ;

* Ver. 244. See NOTE V.

Who, justly conscious of the doubts that start
 In all nice questions on each finer Art,
 With modest doubt assign each likely cause, 255
 But dare to dictate no decisive laws!
 'Tis said by one, who, with this candid claim, *
 Has gain'd no fading wreath of Critic fame,
 Who, fondly list'ning to her various rhyme,
 Has mark'd the Muse's step thro' many a clime; 260
 That, where the settled Rules of Writing spread,
 Where Learning's code of Critic Law is read,
 Tho' other treasures deck th' enlighten'd shore,
 The germs of Fancy ripen there no more.
 Are Critics then, that bold, imperious tribe! 265
 The Guards of Genius, who his path prescribe;
 Are they like Vissirs in an Eastern court,
 Who sap the very power they should support?
 Whose specious wiles the royal mind unnerve,
 And sink the monarch they pretend to serve. 270
 No! of their value higher far I deem;
 And prize their useful toil with fond esteem.

* Ver. 257. See NOTE VI.

When Lowth's firm spirit leads him to explore
 The hallow'd confines of Hebraic lore,
 When his free pages, luminous and bold, 275
 The glorious end of Poesy unfold,
 Assert her powers, her dignity defend,
 And speak her, as she is, fair Freedom's friend;
 When thus he shines his mitred Peers above,
 I view his warmth with reverential love; 280
 Proud, if my verse may catch reflected light
 From the rich splendor of a mind so bright.

Blest be the names, to no vain system tied,
 Who render Learning's blaze an useful guide,
 A friendly beacon, rais'd on high to teach 285
 The wand'ring bark to shun the shallow beach.
 But O! ye noble, and aspiring few,
 Whose ardent souls poetic fame pursue,
 Ye, on whom smiling Heaven, perfection's source,
 Seems to bestow unlimitable force, 290
 The inborn vigor of your souls defend,
 Nor lean too fondly on the firmest friend!
 Genius may sink on Criticism's breast,
 By weak dependance on her truth oppress,

Sleep on her lap, and stretch his lifeless length, 295
Shorn by her soothing hand of all his strength.

Thou wilt not, MASON ! thou, whose generous heart
Must feel that Freedom is the soul of Art,
Thou wilt not hold me arrogant or vain,
If I advise the young poetic train 300
To deem infallible no Critic's word ;
Not e'en the dictates of thy Attic HURD :
No ! not the Stagyrte's unquestion'd page,
The Sire of Critics, sanctified by age !
The noblest minds, with solid reason blest, 305
Who feel that faculty above the rest,
Who argue on those arts they never try,
Exalt that Reason they so oft apply,
Till in its pride, with tyrannous controul,
It crush the kindred talents of the soul ; 310
And hence, in every Art, will systems rise,
Which Fancy must survey with angry eyes ;
And at the lightning of her scornful smile,
In frequent ruin sinks the labor'd pile.

How oft, my ROMNEY ! have I known thy vein 315
Swell with indignant heat and gen'rous pain,

D

To

To hear, in terms both arrogant and tame,
 Some reas'ning Pedant on thy Art declaim :
 Its laws and limits when his sovereign taste
 With firm precision has minutely trac'd, 320
 And in the close of a decisive speech
 Pronounc'd some point beyond the Pencil's reach,
 How has thy Genius, by one rapid stroke,
 Refuted all the sapient things he spoke !
 Thy Canvass placing, in the clearest light, 325
 His own Impossible before his sight !
 O might the Bard who loves thy mental fire,
 Who to thy fame attun'd his early lyre,
 Learn from thy Genius, when dull Fops decide,
 So to refute their systematic pride ! 330
 Let him, at least, succeeding Poets warn
 To view the Pedant's lore with doubt, or scorn,
 And e'en to question, with a spirit free,
 Establish'd Critics of the first degree !
 Among the names that Judgment loves to praise, 335
 The pride of ancient, or of modern days ;
 What Laws of Poesy can Learning shew
 Above the Critic song of sage DESPREAUX ?

His

His fancy elegant, his judgment nice,
 His method easy, and his style concise ; 340
 The Bard of Reason, with her vigor fraught,
 Her purest doctrine he divinely taught ;
 Nor taught in vain ! His precept clear and chaste
 Reform'd the errors of corrupted Taste ;
 And French Imagination, who was bit 345
 By that Tarantula, distorted Wit,
 Ceasing her antie gambols to rehearse,
 Blest the pure magic of his healing verse :
 With his loud fame applauding Europe rung,
 And his just praise a rival Poet sung. 350
 Yet, had this Friend of Verse-devoted Youth,
 This tuneful Teacher of Poetic truth,
 Had he but chanc'd his doctrine to diffuse
 Ere Milton commun'd with his sacred Muse ;
 And could that English, self-dependant soul, 355
 Born with such energy as mocks controul,
 Could his high spirit, with submissive awe,
 Have stoop'd to listen to a Gallic Law ;

His hallow'd subject, by that Law forbid *,
 Might still have laid in silent darkness hid, 360
 And, this bright Sun not rising in our sphere,
 HOMER had wanted still his true compeer.

From hence let Genius to himself be just,
 Hence learn, ye Bards, a liberal distrust;
 Whene'er 'tis said, by System's haughty Son, 365
 That what He cannot do, can ne'er be done,
 'Tis Fancy's right th' exalted throne to press,
 Whose height proud System can but blindly guess,
 Springs, whose existence she denies, unlock,
 And call rich torrents from the flinty rock. 370

Let the true Poet, who would build a name
 In noble rivalry of antient fame,
 When he would plan, to triumph over Time,
 The splendid fabric of his lofty rhyme,
 Let him the pride of Constantine assume, 375
 Th' imperial Founder of the second Rome,
 Who scorn'd all limits to his work assign'd, †
 Save by th' inspiring God who rul'd his mind;

* Ver. 359. See NOTE VII.

† Ver. 377. See NOTE VIII.

Or, like the fabled * Jove, to ascertain
 The doubtful confines of his wide domain, 380
 Two Eagles let him send of equal wing,
 Whose different flight may form a perfect ring,
 And, at the point where Sense and Fancy meet,
 There safely bold, and though sublime discreet,
 His fame's foundation let him firmly lay, 385
 Nor dread the danger of disputed sway !

Yet, if the Bard to glory must aspire
 By free exertion of unborrow'd fire,
 Nor, like the Classic Bigot, vainly deem
 No modern Muse can challenge just esteem, 390
 Unless her robe in every fold be prest
 To fall precisely like the Grecian vest ;
 If the blind notion he must boldly shun,
 That Beauty's countless forms are only one,
 And not, when Fancy, from her magic hoard, 395
 Would blindly bring him treasures unexplor'd,

* Jupiter, ut perhibent, spatium quum discere vellet
 Naturæ, regni nescius ipse sui,
 Armigeros utrimque duos æqualibus alis
 Misit ab Eois Occiduisque plagis.
 Parnassus geminos fertur junxisse volatus ;
 Contulit alternas Pythius axis aves.

CLAUDIAN.

Snap her light wand, and force her hand to bear
 The heavier Compass, and the formal Square ;
 Let him no less their dangerous pride decline,
 Who singly criticise their own design. 400
 In that nice toil what various perils lurk !
 Not Pride alone may mar the needful work ;
 But foes more common to the feeling nerve,
 Where Taste and Genius dwell with coy Reserve,
 The sickly Doubt, with modest weakness fraught, 405
 The languid Tedium of o'erlabour'd thought,
 The Pain to feel the growing work behind
 The finish'd model in the forming mind ;
 These foes, that oft the Poet's bosom pierce,
 These ! that condemn'd to fire Virgilian Verse, 410
 Prove that the Bard, a bold, yet trembling elf,
 Should find a Critic firmer than himself.
 But what fine Spirit will assume the Judge,
 Patient thro' all this irksome toil to drudge ?
 'Tis here, O Friendship ! here thy glories shine ; 415
 The hard, th' important task is only thine ;
 For thou alone canst all the powers unite,
 That justly make it thy peculiar right :

Thine the fixt eye, which at no foible winks ;
 Thine the warm zeal, which utters all it thinks, 420
 In those sweet tones, that hasty Spleen disarm,
 That give to painful Truth a winning charm,
 And the quick hand of list'ning Genius teach,
 To grasp that excellence he burns to reach :
 Thou sweet Subduer of all mental strife ! 425
 Thou Source of vigor ! thou Support of life !
 Nor Art nor Science could delight or live,
 Without that energy thy counsels give :
 Genius himself must sink in dumb despair,
 Unblest, uncherish'd by thy cheering care. 430

Nor let the Bard, elate with youthful fire,
 When Fancy to his hand presents the lyre,
 When her strong plumes his soaring spirit lift,
 When Friendship, Heaven's more high and holy gift,
 With zeal angelic prompts his daring flight, 435
 And round him darts her doubt-dispelling light,
 Let him not then, by Vanity betray'd,
 Look with unjust contempt on Learning's aid !
 But, as th' advent'rous Seaman, to attain
 That bright renown which great Discoverers gain, 440
 Consults

Consults the conduct of each gallant name,
 Who sail'd before him in that chace of Fame,
 Reviews, with frequent glance, their useful chart,
 Marks all their aims, and fathoms all their art,
 So let the Poet trace *their* happy course, 445
 So bravely emulate *their* mental force,
 Whose daring souls, from many a different clime,
 Have nobly ventur'd on the sea of Rhyme !
 Led by no fear, his swelling sail to slack,
 Let him, with eager eyes, pursue the track ; 450
 Not like a Pirate, with insidious views
 To plunder every vessel he pursues,
 But with just hope to find yet farther shores,
 And pass each rival he almost adores !

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

E P I S T L E

T H E S E C O N D.

E

A R G U M E N T

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

Character of Ancient Poets—Homer—Apollonius Rhodius
—Virgil—Lucan.

E P I S T L E II.

HA I L, mighty Father of the Epic line,
 Thou vast, prolific, intellectual Mine,
 Where veins of ancient and of modern gold,
 The wealth of each poetic world, have roll'd !
 Great Bard of Greece, whose ever-during Verse 5
 All ages venerate, all tongues rehearse ;
 Could blind idolatry be justly paid,
 To aught of mental power by man display'd,
 To thee, thou Sire of soul-exalting Song,
 That boundless worship might to thee belong ; 10
 For, as thy Jove, on his Olympian throne,
 In his unrivall'd sway exults alone,
 Commanding Nature by his awful nod,
 In high seclusion from each humbler God ;
 So shines thy Genius thro' the cloud of years, 15
 Exalted far above thy Pagan peers

By the rich splendor of creative fire,
 And the deep thunder of thy martial lyre ;
 The conscious world confesses thy controul,
 And hails thee Sovereign of the kindling soul. 20

Yet, could thy mortal shape revisit earth,
 How would it move, great Bard ! thy scornful mirth,
 To hear vain Pedants to thy Verse assign
 Scholastic thoughts that never could be thine ;
 To hear the quaint conceits of modern Pride 25
 Blaspheme thy Fancy and thy Taste deride ?
 When thus in Vanity's capricious fit,
 We see thy fame traduc'd by Gallic wit, *
 We see a Dwarf, who dares his foot to rest
 On a recumbent Giant's ample chest, 30
 And, lifting his pert form to public sight,
 Boasts, like a child, his own superior height.
 But neither envious Wit's malignant craft,
 Tho' arm'd with Ridicule's envenom'd shaft,
 Nor sickle Fashion's more tyrannic sway, 35
 Whose varying voice the sons of Earth obey,

* Ver. 28. See NOTE I.

Can shake the solid base of thy renown,
 Or blast the verdure of thy Laurel crown.
 Tho' Time, who from his many-colour'd wings,
 Scatters ten thousand shades o'er human things, 40
 Has wrought unnumber'd changes since thy birth,
 And given new features to the face of earth;
 Tho' all thy Gods who shook the starry pole,
 Unquestion'd Rulers of the Pagan soul,
 Are fallen with their fanes, in ruin hurl'd, 45
 Their worship vanish'd from th' enlighten'd world;
 Still its immortal force thy Song retains,
 Still rules obedient man and fires his glowing veins;
 For Nature's self, that great and constant power,
 One and the same thro' every changing hour, 50
 Gave thee each secret of her reign to pierce,
 And stamp'd her signet on thy sacred Verse;
 That awful signet, whose imperial sway
 No age disputes, no regions disobey;
 For at its sight the subject passions start, 55
 And open all the paces of the heart.

'Twas Nature taught thy Genius to display
 That host of Characters who grace thy lay;

So richly varied and so vast the store,
 Her plastic hand can hardly model more : 60
 'Twas Nature, noblest of poetic Guides,
 Gave thee thy flowing Verse, whose copious tides
 Gushing luxuriant from high Fancy's source,
 By no vain art diverted in their course,
 With splendid ease, with simple grandeur roll, 65
 Spread their free wealth, and fertilize the soul.

There are, whom blind and erring zeal betrays.
 To wound thy Genius with ill-judging praise ;
 Who rashly deem thee of all Arts the fire,
 Who draw dull smoke from thy resplendent fire, 70
 Pretend thy fancied Miracles to pierce,
 And form quaint riddles of thy clearest Verse ;
 Blind to those brighter charms and purer worth,
 Which make thy Lays the lasting joy of earth.
 For why has every age with fond acclaim 75
 Swell'd the loud note of thy increasing fame?
 Not that cold Study may from thee deduce
 Vain codes of mystic lore and laws abstruse ;
 But that thy Song presents, like solar light,
 A world in action to th' enraptur'd sight ; 80

That,

That, with a force beyond th' enervate rules
 Of tame Philosophy's pedantic Schools,
 Thy living Images instruct mankind,
 Mould the just heart, and fire th' heroic mind.
 E'en SOCRATES himself, that purest Sage, * 85
 Imbib'd his Wisdom from thy moral page ;
 And haply Greece, the Wonder of the Earth
 For feats of martial fire and civic worth,
 That glorious Land, of noblest minds the nurse,
 Owes her unrivall'd race to thy inspiring Verse ; 90
 For O, what Greek, who in his youthful vein
 Had felt thy soul-invigorating strain,
 Who that had caught, amid the festive throng,
 The public lesson of thy patriot Song,
 Could ever cease to feel his bosom swell 95
 With zeal to dare, and passion to excel.
 In thee thy grateful country justly prais'd
 The noblest Teacher of the tribes she rais'd ;
 Thy voice, which doubly gave her fame to last,
 Form'd future Heroes, while it sung the past. 100
 What deep regret thy fond admirers feel,
 That mythologic clouds thy life conceal ;

* Ver. 85. See NOTE II.

That, like a distant God, thou'rt darkly shewn,
 Felt in thy Works, but in Thyself unknown!
 Perchance the shades that hide thy mortal days 105
 From keen Affection's disappointed gaze,
 And that Idolatry, so fondly proud,
 With which thy Country to thy genius bow'd,
 Might form the cause why, kindling with thy fire,
 No Grecian rival struck thy Epic lyre; 110
 Perchance, not seeing how thy steps were train'd,
 How they the summit of Parnassus gain'd,
 On thy oppressive Glory's flaming pride
 Young Emulation gaz'd, and gazing died.

The Muses of the Attic Stage impart 115
 To many a Votary their kindred art;
 And she who bids the Theban Eagle bear
 Her lyric thunder thro' the stormy air,
 How high soe'er she leads his daring flight,*
 Guides his bold rivals to an equal height. 120
 Of all the Grecian Bards in Glory's race,
 'Tis thine alone, by thy unequall'd pace,

* Ver. 119. See NOTE III.

To reach the goal with loud applause, and hear
 No step approaching thine, no rival near.
 Yet may not Judgment, with severe disdain, 125
 Slight the young RHODIAN's variegated strain ; *
 Tho' with less force he strike an humbler shell,
 Beneath his hand the notes of Passion swell.
 His tender Genius, with alluring art,
 Displays the tumult of the Virgin's heart, 130
 When Love, like quivering rays that never rest,
 Darts thro' each vein, and vibrates in her breast.
 Tho' Nature feel his Verse, tho' she declare
 Medea's magic is still potent there,
 Yet Fancy sees the slighted Poet rove 135
 In pensive anger thro' th' Elysian Grove.
 From Critic shades, whose supercilious pride
 His Song neglected, or his Powers decried,
 He turns indignant—unoppressed by fears,
 Behold, he seeks the sentence of his Peers. 140
 See their just band his honest claim allow,
 See pleasure lighten on his laurell'd brow ;

* Ver. 126. See NOTE IV.

He soars the Critic's cold contempt above,
For VIRGIL greets him with fraternal love!

Hail, thou rich Column, on whose high-wrought frame
The Roman Muse supports her Epic fame! 146

Hail, great Magician, whose illusive charms
Gave pleasing lustre to a Tyrant's arms,
To Jove's pure sceptre turn'd his iron rod,
And made the Homicide a Guardian God! 150

Hail, wond'rous Bard, to Glory's temple led
Thro' paths that Genius rarely deigns to tread;
For Imitation, she whose syren song
Betrays the skillful and unnerves the strong,
Preserving thee on her perfidious shore, 155

Where many a Poet had been wreck'd before,
Led thee to heights that charm th' astonish'd eye,
And with Invention's heaven in splendor vie.
As Rome herself, by long unwearied toil,
Glean'd the fair produce of each foreign soil; 160

From all her wide Dominion's various parts
Borrow'd their laws, their usages, their arts;
Imported knowledge from each adverse zone,
And made the wisdom of the world her own:

Thy patient spirit thus, from every Bard 165
 Whose mental riches won thy just regard,
 Drew various treasure ; which thy skill refin'd,
 And in the fabric of thy Verse combin'd.
 It was thy glory, as thy fond desire,
 To echo the sweet notes of HOMER's lyre ; 170
 But with an art thy hand alone can reach,
 An art that has endear'd the strain of each.
 So the young Nymph, whose tender arms embrace
 An elder Sister of enchanting grace,
 Though form'd herself with every power to please, 175
 By genuine character and native ease,
 Yet fondly copies from her favourite Fair
 Her mien, her motion, her attractive air,
 Her robe's nice shape, her riband's pleasing hue,
 And every ornament that strikes the view ; 180
 But she displays, by imitative art,
 So quick a spirit, and so soft a heart,
 The graceful mimic while our eyes adore,
 We think the model cannot charm us more :
 Tho' seen together, each more lovely shews, 185
 And by comparison their beauty grows.

Some Critics, to decide which Bard prevails,
 Weigh them like Jove, but not in golden scales;
 In their false balance th' injur'd GREEK they raise,
 VIRGIL sinks loaded with their heavy praise. * 190
 Ingenuous Bard, whose mental rays divine
 Shaded by modest doubts more sweetly shine;
 Thou whose last breath, unconscious of the wrong,
 Doom'd to destruction thy sublimest Song;
 How dull their incense in thy sight must burn, 195
 How must thy spirit with abhorrence turn
 From their disgusting rites, who at thy shrine
 Blaspheme thy Master's name, to honor thine!
 More equal tribute, in their simpler flowers,
 The Poets offer to your separate powers; 200
 For all poetic eyes delight to view
 Your different forms, and with devotion due
 In each the radiant Delphic God they own,
 By beauteous majesty distinctly shewn:
 But they behold the lofty HOMER stand 205
 The bright Colossus of the Rhodian land,

* Ver. 190. See NOTE V.

Beneath whose feet the waves submissive roll,
 Whose towering head appears to prop the pole ;
 Stupendous Image ! grand in every part,
 And seeming far above the reach of mortal art. 210
 In thee, thou lovely Mantuan Bard, appear
 The softer features of the Belvidere ;
 That finish'd grace which fascinates all eyes,
 Yet from the copying hand elusive flies :
 Charms so complete, by such pure spirit warm'd, 215
 They make less perfect beauty seem deform'd.

O had thy Muse, whose decorating skill
 Could spread rich foliage o'er the leafless hill ;
 Had she, who knew with nicest hand to frame
 The sweet unperishable wreaths of Fame ; 220
 Had she, exalted by a happier fate,
 Virtue's free Herald, and no Slave of State,
 Deck'd worthier shrines with her unfading flower,
 And given to Freedom what she gave to Power ;
 Then with more keen delight and warmer praise 225
 The world had listen'd to thy bolder lays ;
 Perchance had ow'd to thee (a mighty debt)
 Verse where Perfection her bright seal had set,
 Where Art could nothing blame and Nature nought regret. }

Of

Of coarser form, with less pathetic charms, 230
 Hating with Stoic pride a Tyrant's arms,
 In the keen fervor of that florid time
 When youthful Fancy pours her hasty rhyme,
 When all the mind's luxuriant shoots appear,
 Untrimm'd by Art, by Interest, or Fear, 235
 See daring LUCAN for that wreath contend,
 Which Freedom twines for her poetic friend.
 'Tis thine, thou bold but injur'd Bard, 'tis thine!
 Tho' Critic spleen insult thy rougher line;
 Tho' wrong'd thy Genius, and thy Name misplac'd 240
 By vain distinctions of fastidious Taste;
 Indignant Freedom, with just anger fir'd,
 Shall guard the Poet whom herself inspir'd.
 What tho' thy early, uncorrected page
 Betrays some marks of a degenerate age; 245
 Tho' many a tumid point thy verse contains,
 Like warts projecting from Herculean veins;
 Tho' like thy CATO thy stern Muse appear,
 Her manners rigid, and her frown austere;
 Like him, still breathing Freedom's genuine flame, 250
 Justice her idol, Public Good her aim,

Well

Well she supplies her want of softer art
 By all the sterling treasures of the heart ;
 By Energy, from Independance caught,
 And the free Vigor of unborrow'd Thought. 255
 Thou Bard most injur'd by malicious fate,
 Could not thy Blood appease a Tyrant's hate ?
 Must He, still gall'd by thy poetic claim,
 With falshood persecute thy moral fame ?
 Shall History's pen, to aid his vengeance won, * 260
 Brand thee, brave Spirit, as an impious Son,
 Who meanly fear'd to yield his vital flood,
 And fought his safety by a Parent's blood ?
 Base calumny, at which Belief must halt,
 And blind Credulity herself revolt. 265
 Could that firm Youth become so vile a slave,
 Whose voice new energy to virtue gave ;
 Whose Stoic soul all abject thoughts abhorr'd,
 And own'd no sordid passion as its lord ;
 Who in the trying hour of mortal pain, 270
 While life was ebbing from his open vein,
 Alike unconscious of Remorse and Fear,
 His heart unshaken, and his senses clear,

* Ver. 260. See NOTE VI.

Smil'd on his doom, and, like the fabled bird
 Whose music on Meander's bank was heard, 275
 Form'd into tuneful notes his parting breath,
 And sung th' approaches of undreaded death?
 Rise, thou wrong'd Bard, above Detraction's reach,
 Whose arts in vain thy various worth impeach;
 Enjoy that fame thy spirit knew to prize, 280
 And view'd so fondly with prophetic eyes.
 Tho' the nice Critics of fastidious France
 Survey thy Song with many a scornful glance,
 And as a Goth the kinder judge accuse,
 Who with their great CORNEILLE commends thy Muse,
 Let Britain, eager as the Lesbian State 286
 To shield thy Pompey from the wrongs of Fate,
 To thee with pride a fond attachment shew,
 Thou Bard of Freedom, tho' the world's thy foe.
 As keenly sensible of Beauty's sway, 290
 Let our just isle such generous honor pay
 To the fair partner of thy hapless life,
 As Lesbos paid to Pompey's lovely Wife. *
 Ye feeling Painters, who with genius warm
 Delineate Virtue in her softest form, 295

* Ver. 293. See NOTE VII.

Let ARGENTARIA on your canvass shine, *
 A graceful mourner at her Poet's shrine ;
 For, nobly fearless of the Tyrant's hate,
 She mourns her murder'd Bard in solemn state ;
 With pious care she decks his splendid tomb, 300
 Where the dark Cypress sheds its soothing gloom,
 There frequent takes her solitary stand,
 His dear Pharfalia in her faithful hand ;
 That hand, whose toil the Muses still rehearse,
 Which fondly copied his unfinish'd Verse. 305
 See, as she bends before his recent urn,
 See tender Grief to Adoration turn.
 O lovely Mourner, could my Song bestow
 Unfading glory on thy generous woe,
 Age after age thy virtue should record, 310
 And thou should'st live immortal as thy Lord.
 Him Liberty shall crown with endless praise,
 True to her cause in Rome's degenerate days ;
 Him, like his Brutus, her fond eye regards,
 And hails him as the last of Roman Bards. 315

* Ver. 296. See NOTE VIII.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

G

EPISTLE

E P I S T L E

T H E T H I R D.

A R G U M E N T

OF THE THIRD EPISTLE.

Sketch of the Northern and the Provençal Poetry.—The most distinguished Epic Poets of Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and England.

E P I S T L E III.

BLEST be the hand that with a generous care,
 To the bright Crown which Learning loves to wear,
 Restores the Gem, whose lustre, faint and pale,
 Died in the fold of dark Oblivion's veil.

Such praise, O MASON! to the Bard is due, 5
 In whose fraternal guard thy Genius grew ;
 O'er whose untimely grave thy Lyre has paid
 Its just devotion to a Brother's shade :
 And thus hereafter shall the British Muse,
 In Memory's fane the fairest tablet chuse, 10
 To bid her sons your blended names admire,
 The pride of Friendship's as of Fancy's choir.

Thy modest GRAY, solicitous to pierce
 The dark and distant source of modern Verse,
 By strings untried first taught his English Lyre 15
 To reach the Gothic Harp's terrific fire :

The

The North's wild spectres own his potent hand,
 And Hell's nine portals at his voice expand ;
 With new existence by his Verse endued,
 See Gothic Fable wakes her shadowy brood, 20
 Which, in the Runic rhymes of many a *Scald*,
 With pleasing dread our Northern fires appall'd.

Ye brave Progenitors, ye vigorous Source
 Of modern Freedom and of Europe's force,
 While your rude minds, athirst for martial strife, 25
 Mock'd all the meaner arts of polish'd life,
 The Muse still led you by her magic clue,
 And from your savage strength new vigor drew.
 In War's dire field your dauntless Bards appear'd,
 Aloft their animating harps they rear'd, 30
 Pour'd through the charging host their potent strain,
 And swell'd the fiery flood in Valor's vein.

Souls thus inspir'd, in every scene elate,
 Defied the utmost rage of adverse fate ;
 In tort'ring death the Royal Captive sang, 35
 And smiles of triumph hid his mortal pang. *

* Ver. 36. See NOTE I.

Thus to brave ODIN's Songs, our Northern fire,
 Rude, early framer of the modern Lyre,
 Fierce Freedom gave an energy sublime,
 Parent and Guardian of the Gothic Rhyme. 40

While nurtur'd in the North's protecting arms,
 The modern Muse display'd her infant charms,
 Like Jove's undaunted Child her spirit glow'd,
 And force Herculean in her cradle shew'd ;
 Her native scene in roughness she surpass'd, 45
 Her breath tempestuous as the Northern blast :
 But, when to softer climes the vagrant flew,
 And bask'd beneath a sky of azure hue ;
 When for her throne the flowery South she chose,
 And form'd her crown of the Provençal Rose ; 50
 Warm'd by a brighter Sun's relaxing beams,
 She tun'd her alter'd voice to tender themes :
 Here her gay form a gaudier dress assumes,
 And shines in Chivalry's imperial plumes ;
 Her votaries wear proud Honor's mystic glove, 55
 And every lyre resounds Romantic Love ;
 Save when, to burst Oppression's mental chain,
 Keen Satire mingles with this gallant train,

Strikes Priestly pride with Wit's vindictive flash,
 And galls the ghostly Tyrant with her lash. * 60
 Afraid of Poesy's expansive flood,

These early Bards along the shallows feud
 In some light skiff; for on the depths untried
 No full-trimm'd vessel floats in Epic pride.

As infants, eager for regard, abound 65
 In sportive efforts of uncertain sound,
 Before their little artless lips can reach
 The harder elements of perfect speech;
 So the young language of each modern clime
 Rose by prelusive lays to lofty rhyme. 70

Thro' many an age, while, in the Convent bred,
 O'er the chill'd mind scholastic darkness spread,
 Those keener Spirits, who from Nature caught
 The warmth that kindles to Poetic thought,
 Betray'd, Ambition! by thy blind desire, 75
 Struck with ill-fated zeal the Latian lyre, †
 Tho' Discord's hand the jarring strings had crost,
 And all the sweetness of their tone was lost.

* Ver. 60. See NOTE II.

† Ver. 76. See NOTE III.

At length, fair Italy, luxuriant land,
 Where Art's rich flowers in earliest bloom expand, 80
 Thy daring DANTE his wild Vision sung, *
 And rais'd to Epic pomp his native Tongue.
 Down Arno's stream his new-form'd music floats,
 The proud vale echoing with his Tuscan notes.
 See the bold Bard now sink and now ascend, 85
 Wherever Thought can pierce or Life extend;
 In his wide circuit from Hell's drear abyss,
 Thro' purifying scenes to realms of perfect bliss,
 He seems begirt with all that airy throng,
 Who brighten or debase the Poet's song. 90
 Sublimest Fancy now directs his march
 To opening worlds, through that infernal arch
 O'er whose rough summit awful words are read,
 That freeze each entering soul with hopeless dread.
 Now at her bidding his strong numbers flow, 95
 And rend the heart at Ugolino's woe;
 While Nature's glory-giving tear bedews
 A tale unrivall'd by the Grecian Muse.
 Now to those notes that milder grief inspire,
 Pathetic Tendernefs attunes his lyre, 100

* Ver. 81. See NOTE IV.

Which, soft as murmurs of the plaintive dove,
Tells the sad issue of illicit love.

But all the worse companions of his way
Soon into different sounds his ductile voice betray :

Satiric Fury now appears his guide, 105

Thro' thorny paths of Enmity and Pride ;

Now quaint Conceit his wand'ring steps misleads

Thro' all the hideous forms that Folly breeds ;

Now Priestly Dullness the lost Bard enshrouds

In cold confusion and scholastic clouds. 110

Unequal Spirit ! in thy various strain,

With all their influence Light and Darkness reign ;

In thy strange Verse and wayward Theme alike

New forms of Beauty and Disorder strike ;

Extremes of Harmony and Discord dwell, 115

The Seraph's music and the Demon's yell !

The patient Reader, to thy merit just,

With transport glows, and shudders with disgust.

Thy Failings sprung from thy disastrous time ;

Thy stronger Beauties from a soul sublime, 120

Whose vigor burst, like the volcano's flame,

From central darkness to the sphere of fame.

Of gentler mind, and with a heart to feel
 The fondest warmth of emulative zeal,
 Thy festive Scholar, who ador'd thy Lays, 125
 And grac'd thy Genius with no scanty praise,
 The gay BOCCACCIO, tempts th' Italian Muse *
 More varied notes and different themes to chuse;
 Themes which her voice had dar'd not yet to found,
 Valour's heroic feats by Beauty crown'd. 130
 Sweet was the glowing Song; but, strange to tell,
 On his bold lyre Oblivion's shadows fell;
 His richer Tales engross'd the World's regard,
 And the bright Novelist eclips'd the Bard.

In following ages, when Italia's shore 135
 Blaz'd with the rising light of Classic lore,
 Stern System led, from her new-founded school,
 A Poet fashion'd by her rigid rule:
 Behold my Son! (his sapient Tut'refs cried)
 Who throws the bonds of Gothic rhyme aside; 140
 For whom these hands the Grecian Lyre new strung:
 She spoke exulting, and TRISSINO sung. †

* Ver. 127. See NOTE V.

† Ver. 142. See NOTE VI.

In his cold Verse he kept her Critic laws,
While Pedants own'd their pow'r, and yawn'd applause.

Indignant Fancy, who with scorn survey'd 145
The sleepy honors to proud System paid,
Smiling to see that on her rival's brow
The Poppy lurk'd beneath the Laurel bough,
Resolv'd in sportive triumph to display
The rich extent of her superior sway : 150
From Necromancy's hand, in happiest hour,
She caught the rod of visionary power ;
And as aloft the magic wand she rais'd,
A peerless Bard with new effulgence blaz'd,
Born every law of System to disown, 155
And rule by Fancy's boundless power alone.
High in mid air, between the Moon and Earth,
The Bard of Pathos now, and now of Mirth,
Pois'd with his lyre between a Griffin's wings,
Her sportive darling, ARIOSTO, sings. 160
As the light cloud, whose varying vapors fly,
Driven by the zephyr of the evening sky,
Fixes and charms the never-wearied view,
By taking every shape and every hue ;

So,

So, by Variety's supreme controul, 165
 His changeful numbers seize the willing soul.
 Enchanted by his Song, Attention fits,
 With features catching every cast by fits,
 Like the fond infant, in whose tender brain
 Young Sensibility delights to reign ; 170
 While rapid Joy and Pain each other chafe
 Thro' the soft muscles of its April face.
 In vain the slaves of System would discard
 From Glory's classic train this airy Bard ;
 Delighted Nature her gay fav'rite crown'd, 175
 And Envy's clamour in her plaudit drown'd.
 Severe Morality, to censure mov'd,
 His wanton Lyre with juster blame reprov'd ;
 But his sweet Song her anger so beguil'd,
 That, ere she finish'd her reproof, she smil'd. 180
 Of chaster fire, a rival name succeeds,
 Whose bold and glowing hand Religion leads :
 In solemn accent, and in sacred state,
 With classic lore and Christian zeal elate,
 Sweetly pathetic, and sublimely strong, 185
 Tasso begins his more majestic song ;

The Muse of Sion, not implor'd in vain,
 Guides to th' impassion'd soul his heavenly strain.
 Blush, BOILEAU, blush, and for that pride atone,
 Which slander'd Genius far above thy own ; 190
 And thou, great injur'd Bard, thy station claim
 Amid the Demi-gods of Epic name ;
 Heir to a mantle by the Muses spun,
 Of a poetic Sire the more poetic Son. *

Nor, tho' just Fame her richer palm devote 195
 To the high-sounding lyre of serious note,
 Shall gay TASSONI want his festive crown, †
 Who banish'd from the Muse her awful frown,
 And, tuning to light themes her lofty style,
 O'er her grave features spread a comic smile. 200

Such various Sons, of Epic fire possess,
 Italia foster'd on her feeling breast.

Spain, whose bold genius with misjudging pride
 O'ersteps true glory by too large a stride,
 Claims higher merit from one Poet's birth, 205
 Who rivals all the different Bards of earth :

* Ver. 194. See NOTE VII.

† Ver. 197. See NOTE VIII.

With more than Niobe's parental boast,
 She calls her single Son himself an Host,
 And rashly judges that her VEGA's lyre *
 Is equal to the whole Aonian quire. 210

Impetuous Poet! whose full brain supplied
 Such floods of Verse, and in so quick a tide,
 Their rapid swell, by its unrivall'd height,
 Pleas'd, yet produc'd more wonder than delight:
 Tho' thy free rhyme from Fancy's fountain gush, 215
 And with the grandeur of the torrent rush,
 Its troubled streams in dark disorder roam,
 With all the torrent's noise and all its foam.
 To Emulation fir'd by TASSO's strain,
 Thy spirit quitted the dramatic plain 220
 To seek those Epic heights, sublimely calm,
 Whence he had pluck'd his Idumean palm;
 But, vainly struggling in a task too hard,
 Sunk at the feet of that superior Bard.
 Brave Spaniard! still thy wounded pride console; 225
 Time shall not strike thy name from Glory's roll,

* Ver. 209. See NOTE IX.

On which thy generous and fraternal hand
 Emblaz'd each brother of thy tuneful band ;
 Thy Muse shall share the praise she joy'd to give,
 And while thy language lasts thy fame shall live. 230
 Perchance, tho' strange the paradox may seem,
 That fame had risen with a brighter beam,
 Had radiant Fancy less enrich'd thy mind :
 Her lavish wealth, for wiser use design'd,
 Ruin'd the Poet by its splendid lure, 235
 As India's mines have made his country poor.

With warmth more temperate, and in notes more clear,
 That with Homeric richness fill the ear,
 The brave ERCILLA sounds, with potent breath, *
 His Epic trumpet in the fields of death. 240
 In scenes of savage war when Spain unfurl'd
 Her bloody banners o'er the western world,
 With all his Country's virtues in his frame,
 Without the base alloy that stain'd her name,
 In Danger's camp this military Bard, 245
 Whom Cynthia saw on his nocturnal guard,

* Ver. 239. See NOTE X.

Recorded, in his bold descriptive lay,
 The various fortune of the finish'd day;
 Seizing the pen while Night's calm hours afford
 A transient slumber to his satiate sword, 250
 With noble justice his warm hand bestows
 The meed of Honor on his valiant foes.
 Howe'er precluded, by his generous aim,
 From high pretensions to inventive fame,
 His strongly-colour'd scenes of sanguine strife, 255
 His softer pictures caught from Indian life,
 Above the visionary forms of art,
 Fire the awaken'd mind and melt the heart.

Tho' fiercest tribes her galling fetters drag,
 Proud Spain must strike to Lusitania's flag, 260
 Whose ampler folds, in conscious triumph spread,
 Wave o'er her NAVAL POET's laureate head.
 Ye Nymphs of Tagus, from your golden cell,
 That caught the echo of his tuneful shell,
 Rise, and to deck your darling's shrine provide 265
 'The richest treasures that the deep may hide:
 From every land let grateful Commerce shower
 Her tribute to the Bard who sung her power;

As those rich gales, from whence his GAMA caught
 A pleasing earnest of the prize he fought, 270
 The balmy fragrance of the East dispense,
 So steals his Song on the delighted sense,
 Astonishing, with sweets unknown before,
 Those who ne'er tasted but of classic lore.
 Immortal Bard, thy name with GAMA vies, 275
 Thou, like thy Hero, with propitious skies
 The sail of bold adventure hast unfurl'd,
 And in the Epic ocean found a world.
 'Twas thine to blend the Eagle and the Dove,
 At once the Bard of Glory and of Love : * 280
 Thy thankless Country heard thy varying lyre
 To PETRARCH's Softness melt, and swell to HOMER's Fire!
 Boast and lament, ungrateful land, a Name,
 In life, in death, thy honor and thy shame.
 Thou nobler realm, whom vanity betrays 285
 To load thy letter'd sons with lavish praise ;
 Where Eulogy, with one eternal smile, †
 Heaps her faint roses in a withering pile :

* Ver. 280. See NOTE XI.

† Ver. 287. See NOTE XII.

A City milk-maid, on the first of May,
 Who, pertly civil, and absurdly gay, 290
 Forms her dull garland in fantastic state,
 With ill-adjusted flow'rs and borrow'd plate.
 Canst thou, self-flattering France, with justice vaunt
 One Epic laurel as thy native plant?
 How oft a Gallic hand, with childish fire, 295
 Has rattled Discord on th' heroic lyre,
 While their dull aid associate Critics bring,
 And vainly teach the use of every string!
 In Morals, as, with many an empty boast,
 They practise virtue least who preach it most; 300
 So, haughty Gallia, in thy Epic school,
 No great Examples rise, but many a Rule.*

Yet, tho' unjust to Tasso's nobler lays,
 Kcen BOILEAU shall not want his proper praise; †
 He, archly waving his satiric rod 305
 Thro' the new path which first TASSONI trod,
 Pursued his sportive march in happy hour,
 And pluck'd from Satire's thorn a festive flower.

* Ver. 302. See NOTE XIII.

† Ver. 304. See NOTE XIV.

His sacerdotal War shall wake delight,
 And smiles in Gravity herself excite, 310
 While Canons live to quarrel or to feast,
 And gall can tinge the spirit of a Priest.

Nor, gentle GRESSET, shall thy sprightly rhyme *
 Cease to enchant the list'ning ear of Time :
 In thee the Graces all their powers instill, 315
 To touch the Epic chords with playful skill.
 The hapless Parrot whom thy lays endear,
 In piety and woe the Trojan's peer ;
 His heart as tender, and his love more pure,
 Shall, like Æneas, live of fame secure ; 320
 While female hands, with many a tender word,
 Stroke the soft feathers of their fav'rite bird.

Yet not in childish sport, or trifling joy,
 Do Gallic Fair-ones all their hours employ :
 See lovely BOCCAGE, in ambition strong, † 325
 Build, with aspiring aim, her Epic Song !
 By Glory fir'd, her rosy lips rehearse
 Thy feats, Columbus, in unborrow'd Verse.

* Ver. 313. See NOTE XV.

† Ver. 325. See NOTE XVI.

If this new Muse in War's dire field displays
 No Grecian splendor, no Homeric blaze, 330
 Attractive still, tho' not in pomp array'd,
 She charms like Zama, in her Verse portray'd;
 Whose form from dress no gorgeous pride assumes,
 Clad in a simple zone of azure plumes.
 England's dear guest! this Muse of Gallia caught 335
 From our inspiring Isle her ardent thought;
 Here first she strove to reach, with vent'rous hope,
 MILTON's chaste grandeur, and the grace of POPE;
 And sweetly taught, in her mimetic strain,
 The Songs of Britain to the Banks of Seine. 340

But see! with wounded Pride's indignant glance,
 The angry Genius of presuming France
 From ancient shrines their Epic wreaths would tear,
 To swell the glory of her great VOLTAIRE. *

O, form'd in Learning's various paths to shine, 345
 Encircled from thy birth by all the Nine,
 On thee, blest Bard, these rivals seem'd to shower
 Their various attributes and blended power!

* Ver. 344. See NOTE XVII.

But, when their lofty leader bade thee frame
 The rich Heroic song on Henry's fame, 350
 Sarcastic Humour, trifling with her lyre,
 Took from th' inspiring Muse her solemn fire.
 No more her spirit like the Eagle springs,
 Or rides the buoyant air with balanc'd wings :
 Tho' rapid still, to narrow circuits bound, 355
 She, like the darting Swallow, skims the ground.
 Thy Verse displays, beneath an Epic name,
 Wit's flinty Spark, for Fancy's solar Flame.
 While yet thy hand the Epic chords embrac'd,
 With playful spirit, and with frolic haste, 360
 Such lively sounds thy rapid fingers drew,
 And thro' the festive notes so lightly flew,
 Nature and Fancy join'd their charms to swell,
 And laughing Humour crown'd thy new Pucelle :
 But the chaste Muses, startled at the sound, 365
 Amid thy sprightly numbers blush'd and frown'd ;
 With decent anger, and becoming pride,
 Severer Virtue threw the Song aside ;
 While Justice own'd it, with a kinder glance,
 The wittiest Levity of wanton France. 370
 Now,

Now, graver Britain, amiably severe,
To thee, with native zeal, to thee I steer;
My vent'rous bark, its foreign circuit o'er,
Exulting springs to thy parental shore.

Thou gorgeous Queen, who on thy silvery coast, 375
Sittest encircled by a filial host,
And seest thy sons, the jewels of thy crown,
Blaze with each varying ray of rich renown;
If with just love I hold their Genius dear,
Lament their hardships, and their fame revere, 380
O bid thy Epic Muse, with honor due,
Range her departed Champions in my view!

See, on a party-colour'd steed of fire,
With Humour at his side, his trusty Squire,
Gay CHAUCER leads—in form a Knight of old, 385
And his strong armour is of steel and gold;
But o'er it age a cruel rust has spread,
And made the brilliant metals dark as lead.

Now gentle SPENSER, Fancy's fav'rite Bard,
Awakes my wonder and my fond regard; 390
Encircling Fairies bear, in sportive dance,
His adamant shield and magic lance;

While Allegory, drest with mystic art,
 Appears his Guide ; but, promising to dart
 A lambent glory round her lift'ning Son, 395
 She hides him in the web herself has spun.

Ingenuous COWLEY, the fond dupe of Wit,
 Seems like a vapour o'er the field to flit;
 In David's praise he strikes some Epic notes,
 But soon down Lethe's stream their dying murmur floats.

While COWLEY vanish'd in an amorous riddle, 401
 Up rose the frolic Bard of Bear and Fiddle :
 His smile exhilarates the fullen earth,
 Adorning Satire in the mask of Mirth :
 Taught by his Song, Fanatics cease their jars, 405
 And wise Astrologers renounce the Stars.
 Unrivall'd BUTLER ! blest with happy skill
 'To heal by comic verse each serious ill,
 By Wit's strong flashes Reason's light dispense,
 And laugh a frantic nation into sense ! 410

Apart, and on a sacred hill retir'd,
 Beyond all mortal inspiration fir'd,
 The mighty MILTON sits—an host around
 Of lift'ning Angels guard the holy ground ;

Amaz'd

Amaz'd they see a human form aspire 415
 To grasp with daring hand a Seraph's lyre,
 Inly irradiate with celestial beams,
 Attempt those high, those soul-subduing themes,
 (Which humbler Denizens of Heaven decline)
 And celebrate, with sanctity divine, 420
 The starry field from warring Angels won,
 And God triumphant in his Victor Son.
 Nor less the wonder, and the sweet delight,
 His milder scenes and softer notes excite,
 When at his bidding Eden's blooming grove 425
 Breathes the rich sweets of Innocence and Love.
 With such pure joy as our Forefather knew
 When Raphael, heavenly guest, first met his view,
 And our glad Sire, within his blissful bower,
 Drank the pure converse of th' ætherial Power, 430
 Round the blest Bard his raptur'd audience throng,
 And feel their souls imparadis'd in song.
 Of humbler mien, but not of mortal race,
 Ill-fated DRYDEN, with Imperial grace,
 Gives to th' obedient lyre his rapid laws ; 435
 Tones yet unheard, with touch divine, he draws,

The melting fall, the rising swell sublime,
 And all the magic of melodious rhyme.
 See with proud joy Imagination spread
 A wreath of honor round his aged head ! 440
 But two base Spectres, tho' of different hue,
 The Bard unhappy in his march pursue ;
 Two vile disgraceful Fiends, of race accurst,
 Conceiv'd by Spleen, by meagre Famine nurs'd,
 Malignant Satire, mercenary Praise, 445
 Shed their dark spots on his immortal bays.

Poor DAVENANT march'd before, with nobler aim,
 His keen eye fixt upon the palm of Fame,
 But cruel Fortune doom'd him to rehearse
 A Theme ill-chosen, in ill-chosen Verse. 450

Next came Sir RICHARD, but in woeful plight,
 DRYDEN's Led-horse first threw the luckless Knight.
 He rose advent'rous still—O who may count
 How oft he tried a different Steed to mount !
 Each angry steed his awkward rider flung ; 455
 Undaunted still he fell, and falling sung.

But Æsculapius, who, with grief distressed,
 Beheld his offspring made a public jest,

Soon

Soon bade a livelier Son with mirth efface
 The shame he suffer'd from Sir RICHARD's case. 460
 Swift at the word his sprightly GARTH began
 To make an * helmet of a Close-stool Pan ;
 An Urinal he for his trumpet takes,
 And at each blast he blows see Laughter shakes.

Yet peace—new music floats on Æther's wings ; 465
 Say, is it Harmony herself who sings ?
 No ! while enraptur'd Sylphs the Song inspire,
 'Tis POPE who sweetly wakes the silver lyre
 To melting notes, more musically clear
 Than Ariel whisper'd in Belinda's ear. 470
 Too soon he quits them for a sharper tone ;
 See him, tho' form'd to fill the Epic throne,
 Decline the sceptre of that wide domain,
 To bear a Licor's rod in Satire's train ;
 And, shrouded in a mist of moral spleen, † 475
 Behold him close the visionary scene !

* And his high helmet was a Close-stool Pan. DISPENSARY.

† Ver. 475. See NOTE XVIII.

END OF THE THIRD EPISTLE.

E P I S T L E

T H E F O U R T H.

A R G U M E N T

OF THE FOURTH EPISTLE.

*Remarks on the supposed Parsimony of Nature in bestowing
Poetic Genius.—The Evils and the Advantages of Poetry
exemplified in the Fate of different Poets.*

E P I S T L E IV.

SAY, generous Power, benignant Nature, say,
 Who temp'rest with thy touch our human clay,
 Warming the fields of Thought with genial care,
 The various fruits of mental growth to bear;
 Shall not thy vot'ries glow with just disdain, 5
 When Sloth or Spleen thy bounteous hand arraign?
 Art thou the Niggard they pretend thou art,
 A grudging Parent with a Stepdame's heart;
 And dost thou shed, with rare, reluctant toil,
 Bright Fancy's germins in the mental soil? 10
 Is Genius, thy sweet Plant of richest power,
 Whose dearly priz'd and long-expected flower
 More tardy than the Aloe's bloom appears,
 Ordain'd to blow but in a thousand years?
 Perish the sickly thought—let those who hold 15
 Thy quick'ning influence so coy, so cold,

Calmly the habitable earth survey,
 From time's first æra to the passing day ;
 In what rude clime, beneath what angry skies,
 Have plants Poetic never dar'd to rise ? 20
 In torrid regions, where 'tis toil to think,
 Where souls in stupid ease supinely sink ;
 And where the native of the desert drear
 Yields to blank darkness half his icy year ;
 In these unfriendly scenes, where each extreme 25
 Of heat and cold forbids the mind to teem,
 Poetic blossoms into Being start,
 Spontaneous produce of the feeling heart.

Can we then deem that in those happier lands,
 Where every vital energy expands ; 30
 Where Thought, the golden harvest of the mind,
 Springs into rich luxuriance, unconfin'd ;
 That in such soils, with mental weeds o'ergrown,
 The Seeds of Poesy were thinly sown ?

Shall we deny the labor of the swain 35
 Who to the cultur'd earth confides the grain,
 If all the vagrant harpies of the air
 From its new bed the pregnant treasure tear ;

If, when scarce rising, with a stem infirm,
 It dies the victim of the mining worm ; 40
 If mildew, riding in the eastern gulf,
 Turns all its ripening gold to sable dust ?

These foes combin'd (and with them who may cope ?)
 Are not more hostile to the Farmer's hope,
 Than Life's keen passions to that lighter grain 45
 Of Fancy, scatter'd o'er the infant brain.
 Pleasure, the rambling Bird ! the painted Jay !
 May snatch the richest seeds of Verse away ;
 Or Indolence, the worm that winds with art
 Thro' the close texture of the cleanest heart, 50
 May, if they haply have begun to shoot,
 With partial mischief wound the sick'ning root ;
 Or Avarice, the mildew of the soul,
 May sweep the mental field and blight the whole ;
 Nay, the meek errors of the modest mind, 55
 To its own vigor diffidently blind,
 And that cold spleen, which falsely has declar'd
 The powers of Nature and of Art impair'd,
 The gate that Genius has unclos'd may guard,,
 And rivet to the earth the rising Bard : 60

For who will quit, tho' from mean aims exempt,
 The cares that summon, and the joys that tempt,
 In many a lonely studious hour to try
 Where latent springs of Poesy may lie ;
 Who will from social ease his mind divorce, 65
 To prove in Art's wide field its secret force,
 If, blind to Nature's frank parental love,
 He deems that Verse, descended from above,
 Like Heaven's more sacred signs, whose time is o'er,
 A gift miraculous, conferr'd no more ? 70

O Prejudice ! thou bane of Arts, thou pest,
 Whose ruffian powers the free-born soul arrest ;
 Thou who, dethroning Reason, dar'st to frame
 And issue thy proud laws beneath her name ;
 Thou Coaster on the intellectual deep, 75
 Ordering each timid bark thy course to keep ;
 Who, lest some daring mind beyond thee steer,
 Hast rais'd, to vouch thy vanity and fear,
 Herculean pillars where thy sail was furl'd,
 And nam'd thy bounds the Limits of the World. 80
 Thou braggart. Prejudice, how oft thy breath
 Has doom'd young Genius to the shades of death !

How

How often has thy voice, with brutal fire
 Forbidding Female hands to touch the lyre,
 Deny'd to Woman, Nature's fav'rite child, 85
 The right to enter Fancy's opening wild !
 Blest be this smiling hour, when Britain sees
 Her Fair-ones cancel such absurd decrees,
 In one harmonious group, with graceful scorn,
 Spring o'er the Pedant's fence of wither'd thorn, 90
 And reach Parnassian heights, where, laurel-crown'd,
 This softer Quire the notes of triumph sound ;
 Where SEWARD, leader of the lovely train,
 Pours o'er heroic tombs her potent strain ;
 Potent to soothe the honor'd dead, and dart 95
 Congenial virtue thro' each panting heart ;
 Potent thro' spirits masculine to spread
 Poetic jealousy and envious dread ;
 If Love and Envy could in union rest,
 And rule with blended sway a Poet's breast ; 100
 The Bards of Britain, with unjaundic'd eyes,
 Will glory to behold such rivals rise.
 Proceed, ye Sisters of the tuneful Shell, *
 Without a scruple, in that Art excel,

* Ver. 103. See NOTE I.

Which reigns, by virtuous Pleasure's soft controul, 105
 In sweet accordance with the Female soul ;
 Pure as yourselves, and like your charms design'd
 To bless the earth, and humanize mankind.

Where'er that Parent of engaging thought,
 Warm Sensibility, like light, has taught 110
 The bright'ning mirror of the mind to shew
 Nature's reflected forms in all their glow ;
 Where in full tides the fine affections roll,
 And the warm heart invigorates the soul ;
 In that rich spot, where winds propitious blow, 115
 Culture may teach poetic Fame to grow.
 Refin'd Invention and harmonious Rhyme,
 Are the slow gifts of Study and of Time ;
 But to the Bard whom all the Muses court,
 His Sports are study, and his Studies sport. 120
 E'en at this period, when all tongues declare
 Poetic talents are a gift most rare,
 Unnumber'd Spirits, in our generous isle,
 Are ripening now beneath kind Nature's smile,
 Whom happy care might lead to lasting fame, 125
 And art ennoble with a Poet's name.

Not

Not that 'tis granted this high prize to gain
 By light effusions of a sportive vein,
 The idle Ballad of a summer's morn,
 The child of Frolic, in a moment born : 130
 Who views such trifles with a vain regard,
 But ill deserves the mighty name of Bard ;
 In different tints see virtuous GRESSET trace
 The genuine spirit of Poetic race :

* Let the true Bard (this pleasing Poet sings) 135
 Bid his fair fame on strong foundations rest ;
 His be each honour that from Genius springs,
 Esteem'd by Judgment, and by Love carest ;
 His the Ambition, that in climes unknown,
 Where'er his wand'ring volume may extend, 140
 Where'er that Picture of his mind is shewn,
 In every Reader he may find a Friend.

“ Be

* Je veux qu'épris d'un nom plus légitime,
 Que non content de se voir estimé,
 Par son Genie un Amant de la rime
 Emporte encor le plaisir d'être aimé ;
 Qu'aux régions à lui même inconnues
 Ou voleront ses gracieux écrits,
 A ce tableau de ses mœurs ingénues,
 Tous ses Lecteurs deviennent ses Amis :

Que

Be it his aim to dart the living ray
 Of purest pleasure o'er th' enlighten'd earth ;
 And in sweet union let his works display 145
 The Poet's fancy and the Patriot's worth.

Thus far, O GRESSET, on these points agreed,
 My soul professes thy Poetic Creed ;
 Tho' the soft languor of thy song I blame,
 Which present ease prefers to future fame, 150
 Thy nobler maxims I with pride embrace,
 That Verse shou'd ever rise on Virtue's base,
 And every master of this matchless art
 Exalt the Spirit, and improve the Heart ;
 And many a Youth, now rising into Man, 155
 Might build his glory on this noble plan,
 With latent powers to make the structure last
 Till Nature dies, and Time itself be past :
 But O, how intricate the chances lurk,
 Whose power may drive him from the doubtful work ! 160
 Of the strong minds by chaste Ambition nurs'd,
 Who burn to rank in Honor's line the first,

Que dissipant le préjugé vulgaire,
 Il montre enfin que sans crime on peut plaire,
 Et réunir, par un heureux lien,
 L' Auteur charmant et le vrai Citoyen.

One leaves the Lyre to seize the martial crown,
 And one may drop it at a Parent's frown ;
 For still with scorn, which anxious fear inflames, 165
 Parental care 'gainst Poesy declaims !

“ Fly, fly, my son, (the fond adviser cries)
 “ That thorny path, where every peril lies ;
 “ Oh ! be not thou by that vain Art betray'd,
 “ Whose pains are Substance, and whose joys are Shade !
 “ Mark, in the Muses' miserable throng, 171
 “ What air-built visions cheat the Sons of Song !
 “ This is a lesson taught in every street,
 “ And Bards may read it at each Stall they meet :
 “ Take the first book, behold in many a page 175
 “ What promises of life from age to age ;
 “ The Poet swears himself he ne'er shall die,
 “ A troop of rhyming friends support the lie :
 “ Yet see how soon in Lethe's stream expire
 “ This leading Bard and his attendant Quire, 180
 “ And round these boards, their unexpected bier,
 “ Their ghosts breathe wisdom in the passing ear :
 “ For Stalls, like Church-yards, moral truth supply,
 “ And teach the visionary Bard to die.

“ If

- “ If present fame, thy airy hope, be gain’d, 185
 “ By vigils purchas’d, and by toil maintain’d,
 “ What base alloy must sink the doubtful prize,
 “ Which Envy poisons, and which Spleen denies!
 “ Observe what ill the living Bard attend,
 “ Neglect his lot, and Penury his end! 190
 “ Behold the world unequally requite.
 “ Two Arts that minister to chaste delight,
 “ Twin-sisters, who with kindred beauty strike
 “ In fortune different, as in charms alike:
 “ PAINTING, fair Danae! has her Golden shower, 195
 “ But Want is POESY’s proverbial dower.
 “ See, while with brilliant genius, ill applied,
 “ The noble RUBENS flatters Royal pride,
 “ Makes all the Virtues, who abjur’d him, wait
 “ On abject JAMES, in allegoric state; 200
 “ O’er the base Pedant his rich radiance flings,
 “ And deifies the meanest of our Kings;
 “ His Son rewards, and Honor owns the deed,
 “ The splendid Artist with a princely meed.
 “ Now turn to MILTON’s latter days, and see 205
 “ How Bards and Painters in their fate agree;

- “ Behold him sell his heaven-illumin’d page,
 “ Mirac’lous child of his deserted age,
 “ For such a pittance, so ignobly flight,
 “ As wounded Learning blushes to recite ! * 210
 “ If changing times suggest the pleasing hope,
 “ That Bards no more with adverse fortune cope ;
 “ That in this alter’d clime, where Arts increase,
 “ And make our polish’d Isle a second Greece ;
 “ That now, if Poesy proclaims her Son, 215
 “ And challenges the wreath by Fancy won ;
 “ Both Fame and Wealth adopt him as their heir,
 “ And liberal Grandeur makes his life her care ;
 “ From such vain thoughts thy erring mind defend,
 “ And look on CHATTERTON’s disastrous end. 220
 “ Oh, ill-starr’d Youth, whom Nature form’d, in vain,
 “ With powers on Pindus’ splendid height to reign !
 “ O dread example of what pangs await
 “ Young Genius struggling with malignant fate !
 “ What could the Muse, who fir’d thy infant frame 225
 “ With the rich promise of Poetic fame ;

* Ver. 210. See NOTE II.

“ Who taught thy hand its magic art to hide,
 “ And mock the insolence of Critic pride ;
 “ What cou’d her unavailing cares oppose,
 “ To save her darling from his desperate foes ; 230
 “ From pressing Want’s calamitous controul,
 “ And Pride, the fever of the ardent soul ?
 “ Ah, see, too conscious of her failing power,
 “ She quits her Nursling in his deathful hour !
 “ In a chill room, within whose wretched wall 235
 “ No cheering voice replies to Misery’s call ;
 “ Near a vile bed, too crazy to sustain
 “ Misfortune’s wasted limbs, convuls’d with pain,
 “ On the bare floor, with heaven-directed eyes,
 “ The hapless Youth in speechless horror lies ! 240
 “ The pois’nous vial, by distraction drain’d,
 “ Rolls from his hand, in wild contortion strain’d :
 “ Pale with life-wasting pangs, it’s dire effect,
 “ And stung to madness by the world’s neglect,
 “ He, in abhorrence of the dangerous Art, 245
 “ Once the dear idol of his glowing heart,
 “ Tears from his Harp the vain detested wires,,
 “ And in the frenzy of Despair expires !

1.

“ Pernicious

“ Pernicious Poefy ! thy baleful fway
 “ Exalts to weaken, flatters to betray ; 250
 “ When thy fond Votary has to thee resign’d
 “ The captive powers of his deluded mind,
 “ Fantaftic hopes his fwelling breast inflame,
 “ Tempeftous paſſions tear his ſhatter’d frame,
 “ Which ſinks ; for round it seas of trouble roar, 255
 “ Admitting agony at every pore ;
 “ While Dullnefs, whom no tender feelings check,
 “ Grins at his ruin, and enjoys the wreck ,
 “ Seen thro’ the miſt which clouds her heavy eyes,
 “ The faults of Genius ſwell to double ſize, 260
 “ His generous faults, which her baſe pride makes known,
 “ Infulting errors ſo unlike her own.

“ Far then, my Son, far from this Syren ſteer ;
 “ Or, if her dulcet ſong muſt charm thy ear,
 “ Let Reaſon bind thee, like the Greek of yore, 265
 “ To catch her muſic, but eſcape her ſhore ;
 “ For never ſhall the wretch her power can ſeize,
 “ Regain the port of Fortune, or of Eaſe.”

Parental Fear thus warns the filial heart,
 From this alluring, this inſidious Art ; 270

But, wounded thus by keen Inveſtive's edge,
 Say, can the Muſe no juſt defence alledge?
 In ſtriking contraſt has ſhe not to paint
 Her proſp'rous Hero, as her murder'd Saint?
 'Tis true, ſhe oft has fruitleſs vigils kept, 275
 And oft, with unavailing ſorrow, wept
 Her injur'd Vot'ries, doom'd to quit the earth
 In the ſharp pangs of ill-requited worth.
 Ye noble Martyrs of poetic name,
 " Blifs to your Spirits, to your Mem'ries Fame!" 280
 By gen'rous Honor be your toils rever'd,
 To grateful Nature be your names endear'd!
 To all who Pity's feeling nerve poſſeſs,
 Doubly endear'd by undeſerv'd diſtreſs.
 But, to relieve the pain your wrongs awake, 285
 O let the Muſe her brighter records take,
 Review the crown by living Merit won,
 And ſhare the triumph of each happier Son.
 If the young Bard who ſtarts for Glory's goal,
 Can fate with preſent fame his ardent ſoul, 290
 Poetic ſtory can with truth atteſt
 This rareſt, richeſt prize in life poſſeſt.

See

See the GAY POET of Italia's shore,
 Whom with fond zeal her feeling sons adore,
 Pass, while his heart with exultation beats, 295
 Poetic Mantua's applauding streets !
 See him, while Justice smiles, and Envy snarls,
 Receive the Laurel from Imperial Charles ! *
 And lo, th' unfading Gift still shines above
 Each perishable mark of Royal Love. 300

 If humbler views the tuneful mind inflame,
 If to be rich can be a Poet's aim,
 The Muse may shew, but in a different clime,
 Wealth, the fair produce of applauded Rhyme.
 Behold the fav'rite Bard of lib'ral Spain, 305
 Her wond'rous VEGA, of exhaustless vein ;
 From honest Poverty, his early lot,
 With honor sullied by no vicious blot,
 Behold him rise on Fortune's glittering wings,
 And almost reach the opulence of Kings ; 310
 The high-soul'd Nobles of his native land,
 Enrich their Poet with so frank a hand !

* Ver. 298. See NOTE III.

For him Pieria's rock with treasure teems,
 For him her fountains gush with golden streams ; *
 And ne'er did Fortune, with a love more just, 315
 Her splendid stores to worthier hands entrust ;
 For with the purest current, wide and strong,
 His Charity surpass his copious Song.

If the Enthusiast higher hope pursues,
 If from his commerce with th' inspiring Muse 320
 He seeks to gain, by no mean aims confin'd,
 Freedom of thought and energy of mind ;
 To raise his spirit, with ætherial fire,
 Above each little want and low desire ;
 O turn where MILTON flames with Epic rage, 325
 Unhurt by poverty, unchill'd by age ;
 Tho' danger threaten his declining day,
 Tho' clouds of darkness quench his visual ray,
 The heavenly Muse his hallow'd spirit fills
 With raptures that surmount his matchless ills ; 330
 From earth she bears him to bright Fancy's goal,
 And distant fame illuminates his soul !

Too oft the wealthy, to proud follies born,
 Have turn'd from letter'd Poverty with scorn.

* Ver. 314. See NOTE IV.

Dull Opulence! thy narrow joys enlarge ; 335
 To shield weak Merit is thy noblest charge :
 Search the dark scenes where drooping Genius lies,
 And keep from forriest fights a nation's eyes,
 That, from expiring Want's reproaches free,
 Our generous country may ne'er weep to see 340
 A future CHATTERTON by poison dead,
 AN OTWAY fainting for a little bread.

If deaths like these deform'd our native isle,
 Some English Bards have bask'd in Fortune's smile.
 Alike in Station and in Genius blest, 345
 By Knowledge prais'd, by Dignity carest,
 POPE's happy Freedom, all base wants above,
 Flow'd from the golden stream of Public Love ;
 That richest antidote the Bard can seize,
 To save his spirit from its worst disease, 350
 From mean Dependance, bright Ambition's bane,
 Which blushing Fancy strives to hide in vain.
 To POPE the titled Patron joy'd to bend,
 Still more ennobled when proclaim'd his friend ;
 For him the hands of jarring Faction join 355
 To ^{heap}~~keep~~ their tribute on his HOMER's shrine.

Proud

Proud of the frank reward his talents find,
 And nobly conscious of no venal mind,
 With the just world his fair account he clears,
 And owns no debt to Princes or to Peers. 360

Yet, while our nation feels new thirst arise
 For that pure joy which Poesy supplies,
 Bards, whom the tempting Muse enlists by stealth,
 Perceive their path is not the road to wealth,
 To honorable wealth, young Labor's spoil, 365
 The due reward of no inglorious toil ;
 Whose well-earn'd comforts noblest minds engage,
 The just asylum of declining age ;
 Else had we seen a warm Poetic Youth
 Change Fiction's roses for the thorns of Truth, 370
 From Fancy's realm, his native field, withdraw,
 To pay hard homage to severer Law?

O thou bright Spirit, whom the Asian Muse
 Had fondly steep'd in all her fragrant dews,
 And o'er whose early Song, that mental feast, 375
 She breath'd the sweetness of the ruffled East ;
 Since independant Honor's high controul
 Detach'd from Poesy thy ardent soul,

To

To seek with better hopes Persuasion's seat,
 Blest be those hopes, and happy that retreat ! 380
 Which with regret all British Bards must see,
 And mourn a Brother lost in losing thee.

Nor leads the Poet's path to that throng'd gate
 Where crouching Priests on proud Preferment wait ;
 Where, while in vain a thousand vot'ries fawn, 385
 She robes her fav'rite few in hallow'd Lawn :
 Else, liberal MASON, had thy spotless name,
 The Ward of Virtue as the Heir of Fame,
 In lists of mitred Lords been still unread,
 While Mitres drop on many a Critic's head ? 390
 Peace to all such, whose decent brows may bear
 Those sacred honors plac'd by Learning there ;
 May just respect from brutal insult guard
 Their Crown, unenvied by the genuine Bard !
 Let Poesy, embellish'd by thy care, 395
 Pathetic MASON ! with just pride declare,
 Thy breast must feel a more exulting fire,
 Than Pomp can give, or Dignity inspire,
 When Nature tells thee that thy Verse imparts
 The thrill of pleasure to ten thousand hearts ; 400

And often has she heard ingenuous Youth,
 Accomplish'd Beauty, and unbias'd Truth,
 Those faithful harbingers of future fame,
 With tender interest pronounce thy name
 With lively gratitude for joy refin'd, 405
 Gift of thy Genius to the feeling mind.

These are the honors which the Muse confers,
 The radiant Crown of living light is her's ;
 And on thy brow she gave those gems to blaze,
 That far outshine the Mitre's transient rays ; 410
 Gems that shall mock malignant Envy's breath,
 And shine still brighter thro' the shades of death.

For me, who feel, whene'er I touch the lyre,
 My talents sink below my proud desire ;
 Who often doubt, and sometimes credit give, 415
 When Friends assure me that my Verse will live ;
 Whom health too tender for the bustling throng
 Led into pensive shade and soothing song ;
 Whatever fortune my unpolish'd rhymes
 May meet, in present or in future times, 420
 Let the blest Art my grateful thoughts employ,
 Which soothes my sorrow and augments my joy ;

Whence lonely Peace and social Pleasure springs,
 And Friendship, dearer than the smile of Kings !
 While keener Poets, querulously proud, 425
 Lament the Ills of Poesy aloud,
 And magnify, with Irritation's zeal,
 Those common evils we too strongly feel,
 The envious Comment and the subtle Style
 Of specious Slander, stabbing with a smile ; 430
 Frankly I wish to make her Blessings known,
 And think those Blessings for her Ills atone :
 Nor wou'd my honest pride that praise forego,
 Which makes Malignity yet more my foe.

If heart-felt pain e'er led me to accuse 435
 The dangerous gift of the alluring Muse,
 'Twas in the moment when my Verse imprest
 Some anxious feelings on a Mother's breast.

O thou fond Spirit, who with pride hast smil'd,
 And frown'd with fear, on thy poetic child, 440
 Pleas'd, yet alarm'd, when in his boyish time
 He sigh'd in numbers, or he laugh'd in rhyme ;
 While thy kind cautions warn'd him to beware
 Of Penury, the Bard's perpetual snare ;

Marking the early temper of his soul, 445
 Careless of wealth, nor fit for base controul :
 Thou tender Saint, to whom he owes much more
 Than ever Child to Parent ow'd before,
 In life's first season, when the fever's flame
 Shrunk to deformity his shrivell'd frame, 450
 And turn'd each fairer image in his brain
 To blank confusion and her crazy train,
 'Twas thine, with constant love, thro' ling'ring years,
 To bathe thy Idiot Orphan in thy tears ;
 Day after day, and night succeeding night, 455
 To turn incessant to the hideous sight,
 And frequent watch, if haply at thy view
 Departed Reason might not dawn anew.
 Tho' medicinal art, with pitying care,
 Cou'd lend no aid to save thee from despair, 460
 Thy fond maternal heart adher'd to Hope and Prayer :
 Nor pray'd in vain ; thy child from Pow'rs above
 Receiv'd the sense to feel and bless thy love ;
 O might he thence receive the happy skill,
 And force proportion'd to his ardent will, 465
 With Truth's unfading radiance to emblaze
 Thy virtues, worthy of immortal praise !

Nature,

Nature, who deck'd thy form with Beauty's flowers,
 Exhausted on thy soul her finer powers ;
 Taught it with all her energy to feel 470
 Love's melting softness, Friendship's fervid zeal,
 The generous purpose, and the active thought,
 With Charity's diffusive spirit fraught ;
 There all the best of mental gifts she plac'd,
 Vigor of Judgment, purity of Taste, 475
 Superior parts, without their spleenful leaven,
 Kindness to Earth, and confidence in Heaven.

While my fond thoughts o'er all thy merits roll,
 Thy praise thus gushes from my filial soul ;
 Nor will the Public with harsh rigor blame 480
 This my just homage to thy honor'd name ;
 To please that Public, if to please be mine,
 Thy Virtues train'd me—let the praise be thine.

Since thou hast reach'd that world where Love alone,
 Where Love Parental can exceed thy own ; 485
 If in celestial realms the blest may know
 And aid the objects of their care below,
 While in this sublunary scene of strife
 Thy Son possesses frail and feverish life,

If Heaven allot him many an added hour, 490
 Gild it with virtuous thought and mental power,
 Power to exalt, with every aim refin'd,
 The loveliest of the Arts that blefs mankind!

END OF THE FOURTH EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

E P I S T L E

T H E F I F T H.

A R G U M E N T

OF THE FIFTH EPISTLE.

Examination of the received opinion, that supernatural Agency is essential to the Epic Poem.—The folly and injustice of all arbitrary systems in Poetry.—The Epic province not yet exhausted.—Subjects from English History the most interesting.—A national Epic Poem the great desideratum in English literature.—The Author's wish of seeing it supplied by the genius of Mr. MASON.

E P I S T L E V.

ILL-FATED Poesy ! as human worth,
 Prais'd, yet unaided, often sinks to earth ;
 So sink thy powers ; not doom'd alone to know
 Scorn, or neglect, from an unfeeling Foe,
 But destin'd more oppressive wrong to feel 5
 From the misguided Friend's perplexing zeal.
 Such Friends are those, who in their proud display
 Of thy young beauty, and thy early sway,
 Pretend thou'rt robb'd of all thy warmth sublime,
 By the benumbing touch of modern Time. 10

What ! is the Epic Muse, that lofty Fair,
 Who makes the discipline of Earth her care !
 That mighty Minister, whom Virtue leads
 To train the noblest minds to noblest deeds !
 Is she, in office great, in glory rich, 15
 Degraded to a poor, pretended Witch,

O

Who

Who rais'd her spells, and all her magic power,
 But on the folly of the favoring hour?
 Whose dark, despis'd illusions melt away
 At the clear dawn of Philosophic day? 20
 To such they sink her, who lament her fall
 From the high Synod of th' Olympian Hall;
 Who worship System, hid in Fancy's veil,
 And think that all her Epic force must fail,
 If she no more can borrow or create 25
 Celestial Agents to uphold her state.
 To prove if this fam'd doctrine may be found
 To rest on solid, or on sandy ground,
 Let Critic Reason all her light diffuse
 O'er the wide empire of this injur'd Muse, 30
 To guide our search to every varied source
 And separate sinew of her vital force.—
 To three prime powers within the human frame,
 With equal energy she points her aim :
 By pure exalted Sentiment she draws 35
 From Judgment's steady voice no light applause;
 By Nature's simple and pathetic strains,
 'The willing homage of the Heart she gains;

The

The precious tribute she receives from these,
 Shines undebas'd by changing Time's decrees ; 40
 The noble thought, that fir'd a Grecian soul,
 Keeps o'er a British mind its firm controul ;
 The scenes, where Nature seems herself to speak,
 Still touch a Briton, as they touch'd a Greek :
 To captivate admiring Fancy's eyes, 45
 She bids celestial decorations rise ;
 But, as a playful and capricious child
 Frowns at the splendid toy on which it smil'd ;
 So wayward Fancy now with scorn surveys
 Those specious Miracles she lov'd to praise ; 50
 Still fond of change, and fickle Fashion's dupe,
 Now keen to soar, and eager now to stoop,
 Her Gods, Dev'ls, Saints, Magicians, rise and fall,
 And now she worships each, now laughs at all.

If then within the rich and wide domain 55
 O'er which the Epic Muse delights to reign,
 One province weaker than the rest be found,
 'Tis her Celestial Sphere, or Fairy Ground :
 Her realm of Marvels is the distant land,
 O'er which she holds a perilous command ; 60

For, plac'd beyond the reach of Nature's aid,
 Here her worst foes her tottering force invade :
 O'er the wide precinct proud Opinion towers,
 And withers with a look its alter'd powers ;
 While lavish Ridicule, pert Child of Taste ! 65
 Turns the rich confine to so poor a waste,
 That some, who deem it but a cumbrous weight,
 Would lop this Province from its Parent State.

What mighty voice first spoke this wond'rous law,
 Which ductile Critics still repeat with awe — 70
 That man's unkindling spirit must refuse
 A generous plaudit to th' Heroic Muse,
 Howe'er she paint her scenes of manly life,
 If no superior Agents aid the strife ?

In days of courtly wit, and wanton mirth, 75
 The loose PETRONIUS gave the maxim birth ; *
 Perchance, to sooth the envious Nero's ear,
 And sink the Bard whose fame he sigh'd to hear ;
 To injure LUCAN, whose advent'rous mind,
 Inflam'd by Freedom, with just scorn resign'd 80

* Ver. 76. See NOTE I.

Th' exhausted fables of the starry pole,
 And found a nobler theme in CATO's soul :
 To wound him, in the mask of Critic art,
 The subtle Courtier launch'd this venom'd dart,
 And following Critics, fond of Classic lore, 85
 Still echo the vain law from shore to shore ;
 On Poets still for Deities they call,
 And deem mere earthly Bards no Bards at all.
 Yet, if by fits the mighty HOMER nods,
 Where sinks he more than with his sleepy Gods? 90
 E'en LUCAN proves, by his immortal name,
 How weak the dagger levell'd at his fame ;
 For in his Song, which Time will ne'er forget,
 If Taste, who much may praise, will much regret,
 'Tis not the absence of th' Olympian state, 95
 Embroil'd by jarring Gods in coarse debate :
 'Tis nice arrangement, Nature's easy air,
 In scenes unfolded with superior care ;
 'Tis softer diction, elegantly terse,
 And the fine polish of Virgilian Verse. 100
 O blind to Nature ! who assert the Muse
 Must o'er the human frame her empire lose,

Failing

Failing to fly, in Fancy's wild career,
Above this visible diurnal sphere !

Behold yon pensive Fair ! who turns with grief 105
The tender Novel's soul-possessing leaf !
Why with moist eyes to those soft pages glu'd,
Forgetting her fix'd hours of sleep and food ;
Why does she keenly grasp its precious woes,
Nor quit the volume till the story close ? 110
'Tis not that Fancy plays her revels there,
Cheating the mind with lucid forms of air ;
'Tis not that Passion, in a style impure,
Holds the warm spirit by a wanton lure :
'Tis suffering Virtue's sympathetic sway, 115
That all the fibres of her breast obey ;
'Tis Action, where Immortals claim no part ;
'Tis Nature, grappled to the human heart.

If this firm Sov'reign of the feeling breast
Can thus the fascinated thought arrest, 120
And thro' the bosom's deep recesses pierce,
Ungrac'd, unaided by enchanting Verse,
Say ! shall we think, with limited controul,
She wants sufficient force to seize the soul,

When Harmony's congenial tones convey 125
 Charms to her voice, that aid its magic sway ?
 If Admiration's hand, with eager grasp,
 Her darling HOMER's deathless volume clasp,
 Say to what scenes her partial eyes revert !
 Say what they first explore, and last desert ! 130
 The scenes that glitter with no heavenly blaze,
 Where human agents human feelings raise,
 While Truth, enamor'd of the lovely line,
 Cries to their parent Nature, " These are thine."
 When Neptune rises in Homeric state, 135
 And on their Lord the Powers of Ocean wait ;
 Tho' pliant Fancy trace the steps he trod,
 And with a transient worship own the God,
 Yet colder readers with indifference view,
 The Sovereign of the deep, and all his vassal crew, 140
 Nor feel his watery pomp their mind enlarge,
 More than the pageant of my Lord May'r's barge.
 But when Achilles' wrongs our eyes engage,
 All bosoms burn with sympathetic rage :
 And when thy love parental, Chief of Troy ! 145
 Hastes to relieve the terrors of thy boy,

Our

Our senses in thy fond emotion join,
And every heart's in unison with thine.

Still in the Muse's ear shall Echo ring,
'That heavenly Agents are her vital spring? 150
Those who conclude her winning charms arise
From Beings darting from the distant skies,
Appear to cherish a conceit as vain,
As once was harbour'd in Neanthus' brain,
When he believ'd that harmony must dwell 155
In the cold concave of the Orphic shell:
The ancient Lyre, to which the Thracian sung,
Whose hallow'd chords were in a temple hung,
The shallow Youth with weak ambition fought,
And of the pilfering Priest the relique bought; 160
Viewing his treasure with deluded gaze,
He deem'd himself the heir of Orphic praise;
But when his awkward fingers tried to bring
Expected music from the silent string,
Not e'en the milder brutes his discord bore, 165
But howling dogs the fancied Orpheus tore. *

* Ver. 166. See NOTE II.

When the true Poet, in whose frame are join'd
 Softness of Heart and Energy of Mind,
 His Epic scene's expansive limit draws,
 Faithful to Nature's universal laws; 170
 If thro' her various walks he boldly range,
 Marking how oft her pliant features change;
 If, as she teaches, his quick powers supply
 Successive pictures to th' astonish'd eye,
 Where noblest passions noblest deeds inspire, 175
 And radiant souls exhibit all their fire;
 Where softer forms their sweet attractions blend,
 And suffering Beauty makes the world her friend;
 If thus he build his Rhyme, with varied art,
 On each dear interest of the human heart, 180
 His genius, by no vain conceits betray'd,
 May spurn faint Allegory's feeble aid.

Th' Heroic Muse, in earthly virtue strong,
 May drive the host of Angels from her Song,
 As her fair Sister Muse, the Tragic Queen, 185
 Has banish'd Ghosts from her pathetic scene,
 Tho' her high soul, by SHAKESPEARE's magic sway'd,
 Still bends to buried Denmark's awful Shade.

If we esteem this Epic Queen so great,
 To spare her heavenly train, yet keep her state, 190
 'Tis not our aim, with systematic pride,
 To sink their glory, or their powers to hide,
 Who add, when folded in the Muse's arms,
 Celestial beauty to her earthly charms.

Sublimely fashion'd, by no mortal hands, 195
 The dome of mental Pleasure wide expands:
 Form'd to preside o'er its allotted parts,
 At different portals stand the separate Arts;
 But every portal different paths may gain,
 Alike uniting in the mystic Fane. 200

Contentious mortals on these paths debate;
 Some, wrangling on the road, ne'er reach the gate,
 While others, arm'd with a despotic rod,
 Allow no pass but what themselves have trod.

The noblest spirits, to this foible prone, 205
 Have slander'd powers congenial with their own:
 Hence, on a Brother's genius MILTON frown'd,
 Scorning the graceful chains of final sound,
 And to one form confin'd the free sublime,
 Insulting DRYDEN as the Man of Rhyme. 210

Caprice

Caprice still gives this lasting struggle life ;
 Rhyme and Blank Verse maintain their idle strife :
 The friends of one are still the other's foes,
 For stubborn Prejudice no mercy knows.
 As in Religion, Zealots, blindly warm, 215
 Neglect the Essence, while they grasp the Form ;
 Poetic Bigots, thus perversely wrong,
 Think Modes of Verse comprize the Soul of Song.

If the fine Statuary fill his part
 With all the powers of energetic Art ; 220
 If to the figures, that, with skill exact,
 His genius blends in one impassion'd act,
 If to this Group such speaking force he give,
 That startled Nature almost cries " They live ;"
 All tongues with zeal th' enchanting work applaud, 225
 Nor the great Artist of due praise defraud,
 Whether he form'd the rich expressive mass
 Of Parian marble, or Corinthian brass ;
 For each his powers might fashion to fulfil
 The noblest purpose of mimetic skill ; 230
 Each from his soul might catch Promethean fire,
 And speak his talents, till the world expire.

'Tis thus that MILTON's Verse, and DRYDEN's Rhyme,
Are proof alike against the rage of Time ;
Each Master modell'd, with a touch so bold, 235
The rude materials which he chose to mould,
That each his portion to perfection brought,
Accomplishing the glorious end he sought.

False to themselves, and to their interest blind,
Are those cold judges, of fastidious mind, 240
Who with vain rules the suffering Arts would load,
Who, ere they smile, consult the Critic's code ;
Where, puzzled by the different doubts they see,
(For who so oft as Critics disagree ?)
They lose that pleasure by free spirits seiz'd, 245
In vainly settling how they should be pleas'd.

Far wiser those, who, with a generous joy,
Nor blindly fond, nor petulantly coy,
Follow each movement of the varying Muse,
Whatever step her airy form may chuse, 250
Nor to one march her rapid feet confine,
While ease and spirit in her gesture join ;
Those who facilitate her free desire,
To melt the heart, or set the soul on fire ;

Who,

Who, if her voice to simple Nature lean, 255
 And fill with Human forms her Epic scene ;
 Pleas'd with her aim, assist her moral plan,
 And feel with manly sympathy for Man :
 Or if she draw, by Fancy's magic tones,
 Ætherial Spirits from their sapphire thrones, 260
 Her Heavenly shapes with willing homage greet,
 And aid, with ductile thought, her bright deceit ;
 For, if the Epic Muse still wish to tower
 Above plain Nature's firm and graceful power,
 Tho' Critics think her vital powers are lost 265
 In cold Philosophy's petrific frost ;
 That Magic cannot her sunk charms restore,
 That Heaven and Hell can yield her nothing more ;
 Yet may she dive to many a secret source
 And copious spring of visionary force : 270
 India yet holds a Mythologic mine,
 Her strength may open, and her art refine :
 Tho' Asian spoils the realms of Europe fill,
 Those Eastern riches are unrivall'd still ;
 Genius may there his course of honor run, 275
 And spotless Laurels in that field be won. *

* Ver. 276. See NOTE III.

Yet nobler aims the Bards of Britain court,
 Who steer by Freedom's star to Glory's port ;
 Our gen'rous Isle, with far superior claim,
 Asks for her Chiefs the palm of Epic fame. 280

In every realm where'er th' Heroic Muse
 Has deign'd her glowing spirit to infuse,
 Her tuneful Sons with civic splendor blaze,
 The honour'd Heralds of their country's praise,
 Save in our land, the nation of the earth 285
 Ordain'd to give the brightest Heroes birth !—
 By some strange fate, which rul'd each Poet's tongue,
 Her dearest Worthies yet remain unfung.

Critics there are, who, with a scornful smile,
 Reject the annals of our martial Isle, 290
 And, dead to patriot Passion, coldly deem
 They yield for lofty Song no touching theme.

What ! can the British heart, humanely brave,
 Feel for the Greek who lost his female slave ?
 Can it, devoted to a savage Chief, 295
 Swell with his rage, and soften with his grief ?
 And shall it not with keener zeal embrace
 Their brighter cause, who, born of British race,

With the strong cement of the blood they spilt,
 The splendid fane of British Freedom built? 300
 Blest Spirits, who, with kindred fire endued,
 Thro' different ages this bright work pursued,
 May Art and Genius crown your fainted band
 With that poetic wreath your Deeds demand!

While, led by Fancy thro' her wide domain, 305
 Our steps advance around her Epic plain;
 While we survey each laurel that it bore,
 And every confine of the realm explore,
 See Liberty, array'd in light serene,
 Pours her rich lustre o'er th' expanding scene! 310
 Thee, MASON, thee she views with fond regard,
 And calls to nobler heights her fav'rite Bard.

Tracing a circle with her blazing spear,
 "Here," cries the Goddess, "raise thy fabric here,
 Build on these rocks, that to my reign belong, 315
 The noblest basis of Heroic Song!

Fix here! and, while thy growing works ascend,
 My voice shall guide thee, and my arm defend."
 As thus she speaks, methinks her high behest
 Imparts pure rapture to thy conscious breast, 320
 Pure

Pure as the joy immortal NEWTON found,
 When Nature led him to her utmost bound,
 And clearly shew'd, where unborn ages lie,
 The distant Comet to his daring eye ;
 Pure as the joy the Sire of mortals knew, 325
 When blissful Eden open'd on his view,
 When first he listen'd to the voice Divine,
 And wond'ring heard, " This Paradise is thine."
 With such delight may'st thou her gift receive !
 May thy warm heart with bright ambition heave 330
 To raise a Temple to her hallow'd name,
 Above what Grecian artists knew to frame !
 Of English form the sacred fabric rear,
 And bid our Country with just rites revere
 The Power, who sheds, in her benignant smile, 335
 The brightest Glory on our boasted Isle !

Justly on thee th' inspiring Goddess calls ;
 Her mighty task each weaker Bard appalls :
 'Tis thine, O MASON ! with un baffled skill,
 Each harder duty of our Art to fill ; 340
 'Tis thine, in robes of beauty to array,
 And in bright Order's lucid blaze display,

The

The forms that Fancy, to thy wishes kind,
 Stamps on the tablet of thy clearer mind.
 How softly sweet thy notes of pathos swell, 345
 The tender accents of Elfrida tell ;
 Caractacus proclaims, with Freedom's fire,
 How rich the tone of thy sublimer Lyre ;
 E'en in this hour, propitious to thy fame,
 The rural Deities repeat thy name : 350
 With festive joy I hear the sylvan throng
 Hail the completion of their favorite Song,
 Thy graceful Song ! in honor of whose power,
 Delighted Flora, in her sweetest bower,
 Weaves thy unfading wreath ;—with fondest care, 355
 Proudly she weaves it, emulously fair,
 To match that crown, which in the Mantuan grove
 The richer Ceres for her VIRGIL wove !
 See ! his Euridice herself once more
 Revisits earth from the Elysian shore ! 360
 Behold ! she hovers o'er thy echoing glade !
 Envy, not love, conducts the pensive Shade,
 Who, trembling at thy Lyre's pathetic tone,
 Fears lest Nerina's fame surpass her own.

Q

Thou

Thou happy Bard ! whose sweet and potent voice 365
 Can reach all notes within the Poet's choice ;
 Whose vivid soul has led thee to infuse
 Dramatic life in the preceptive Muse ;
 Since, blest alike with Beauty and with Force,
 Thou rivall'st VIRGIL in his Sylvan course, 370
 O be it thine the higher palm to gain,
 And pass him in the wide Heroic plain !
 To sing, with equal fire, of nobler themes,
 To gild Historic Truth with Fancy's beams !
 To Patriot Chiefs unsung thy Lyre devote, 375
 And swell to Liberty the lofty note !

With humbler aim, but no ungenerous view,
 My steps, less firm, their lower path pursue ;
 Of different Arts I search the ample field,
 Mark its past fruits, and what it yet may yield ; 380
 With willing voice the praise of Merit sound,
 And bow to Genius wheresoever found ;
 O'er my free Verse bid noblest names preside,
 Tho' Party's hostile lines those names divide ;
 Party ! whose murdering spirit I abhor, 385
 More subtly cruel, and less brave than War.

Party ! infidious Fiend ! whose vapors blind
 The light of Justice in the brightest mind ;
 Whose feverish tongue, whence deadly venom flows,
 Basely belies the merit of her foes ! 390

O that my Verse with magic power were blest,
 To drive from Learning's field this baleful pest !
 Fond, fruitless wish ! the mighty task would foil
 The firmest sons of Literary Toil ;
 In vain a letter'd Hercules might rise 395

To cleanse the stable where this Monster lies :
 Yet, if the Imps of her malignant brood,
 With all their Parent's acrid gall endu'd ;
 If Spleen pours forth, to Mockery's apish tune,
 Her gibing Ballad, and her base Lampoon, 400
 On fairest names, from every blemish free,
 Save what the jaundic'd eyes of Party see ;
 My glowing scorn will execrate the rhyme,
 Tho' laughing Humor strike its tuneful chime ;
 Tho' keenest Wit the glitt'ring lines invest 405
 With all the splendor of the Adder's crest.

Sublimer MASON ! not to thee belong
 The reptile beauties of envenom'd Song.

'Thou chief of living Bards ! O be it ours,
 In fame tho' different, as of different powers, 410
 Party's dark clouds alike to rise above,
 And reach the firmament of Public Love !
 May'st thou ascend Parnassus' highest mound,
 In triumph there the Epic Trumpet sound ;
 While, with no envious zeal, I thus aspire 415
 By just applause to fan thy purer fire ;
 And of the Work which Freedom pants to see,
 Which thy firm Genius claims reserv'd for thee,
 In this frank style my honest thoughts impart,
 If not an Artist yet a friend to Art. 420

N O T E S.

N O T E S
T O T H E
F I R S T E P I S T L E.

NOTE I. Ver. 7.

*SUCH dark decrees have letter'd Bigots penn'd,
Yet seiz'd that honor'd name, the Poet's Friend.*] Of the several authors who have written on Epic Poetry, many of the most celebrated are more likely to confound and depress, than to enlighten and exalt the young Poetical Student. The Poetics of Scaliger, which are little more than a laboured panegyric of Virgil, would lead him to regard the *Æneid* as the only standard of perfection; and the more elegant and accomplished Vida inculcates the same pusillanimous lesson, though in spirited and harmonious verse.

Unus hic ingenio præstanti gentis Achivæ
Divinos vates longe superavit, et arte,
Aureus immortale sonans. stupet ipsa pavetque,
Quamvis ingentem miretur Græcia Homerum.

— — — — —
Ergo ipsum ante alios animo venerare Maronem,
Atque unum sequere, utque potes, vestigia serva!

VIDA.

See how the Grecian Bards, at distance thrown,
With reverence bow to this distinguish'd son;
Immortal sounds his golden lines impart,
And nought can match his Genius but his Art;

E'en Greece turns pale and trembles at his fame,
Which shades the lustre of her Homer's name.

— — — — —
Hence, sacred Virgil from thy soul adore
Above the rest, and to thy utmost power
Pursue the glorious paths he struck before.

}

PITT'S Translation.

A Critic, who lately rose to great eminence in our own country, has endeavoured by a more singular method to damp the ardour of inventive Genius, and to annihilate the hopes of all who would aspire to the praise of originality in this higher species of poetical composition. He has attempted to establish a Triumvirate in the Epic world, with a perpetuity of dominion. Every reader who is conversant with modern criticism will perceive that I allude to the following passage in the famous Dissertation on the sixth Book of Virgil:—"Just as Virgil rivalled Homer, so Milton emulated both of them. He found Homer possessed of the province of Morality; Virgil of Politics; and nothing left for him but that of Religion. This he seized, as aspiring to share with them in the government of the Poetic world: and, by means of the superior dignity of his subject, hath gotten to the head of that Triumvirate, which took so many ages in forming. These are the three species of the Epic Poem; for its largest sphere is *human action*, which can be considered but in a *moral*, political, or religious view: and These the three *Makers*; for each of their Poems was struck out at a heat, and came to perfection from its first essay. Here then the grand scene was closed, and all farther improvements of the Epic at an end."

I apprehend that few critical remarks contain more *absurdity* (to use the favourite expression of the author I have quoted) than the preceding lines. Surely Milton is himself a proof that *human action* is not the largest sphere of the Epic Poem; and as to Virgil, his most passionate admirers must allow, that in subject and design he is much less of an original than Camoens or Lucan. But such a critical statute of limitation, if I may call it so, is not less pernicious than absurd. To disfigure the sphere of Imagination with these capricious and arbitrary zones is an injury to science. Such Criticism, instead of giving spirit

and energy to the laudable ambition of a youthful Poet, can only lead him to start like Macbeth at unreal mockery, and to exclaim, when he is invited by Genius to the banquet, "The Table's full."

NOTE II. Ver. 77.

Thus, at their banquets, fabling Greeks rehearse

[The fancied origin of sacred Verse.] For this fable, such as it is, I am indebted to a passage in Athenæus, which the curious reader may find in the close of that fanciful and entertaining compiler, page 701 of Casaubon's edition.

NOTE III. Ver. 207.

Why did the Epic Muse's silent lyre

Sbrink from those feats that summon'd all her fire ?] I have ventured to suppose that Greece produced no worthy successor of Homer, and that her exploits against the Persians were not celebrated by any Poet in a manner suitable to so sublime a subject;—yet an author named Chærilus is said to have recorded those triumphs of his country in verse, and to have pleased the Athenians so highly as to obtain from them a public and pecuniary reward. He is supposed to have been a cotemporary of the historian Herodotus. But from the general silence of the more early Greek writers concerning the merit of this Poet, we may, I think, very fairly conjecture that his compositions were not many degrees superior to those of his unfortunate namesake, who frequented the court of Alexander the Great, and is said to have sung the exploits of his Sovereign, on the curious conditions of receiving a piece of gold for every good verse, and a box on the ear for every bad one. The old Scholiast on Horace, who has preserved this idle story, concludes it by saying, that the miserable Bard was beat to death in consequence of his contract. Some eminent modern Critics have indeed attempted to vindicate the reputation of the more early Chærilus, who is supposed to be confounded, both by Horace himself, and afterwards by Scaliger, with the Chærilus rewarded by Alexander. Vossius *, in particular, appears a warm advocate in his behalf, and appeals to various fragments of the ancient Bard

* De Historicis Græcis.

preserved by Aristotle, Strabo, and others, and to the testimony of Plutarch in his favour. But on consulting the fragments he has referred to, they rather fortify than remove my conjecture. The scrap preserved by Aristotle in his Rhetoric is only half a verse, and quoted without any commendation of its author. The two citations in Strabo amount to little more. The curious reader may also find in Athenæus an Epitaph on Sardanapalus, attributed to this Poet; who is mentioned by the same author as peculiarly addicted to the grosser excesses of the table.—Let us now return to that Chærilus whom Horace has “damn’d to everlasting fame.” The judicious and elegant Roman Satirist seems remarkably unjust, in paying a compliment to the poetical judgment of his patron Augustus, at the expence of the Macedonian hero. Alexander appears to have possessed much more poetical spirit, and a higher relish for poetry, than the cold-blooded Octavius. It is peculiarly unfair, to urge his liberality to a poor Poet as a proof that he wanted critical discernment, when he had himself so thoroughly vindicated the delicacy of his taste, by the enthusiastic Bon-mot, that he had rather be the Thersites of Homer than the Achilles of Chærilus.

NOTE IV. VERSE 231.

When grave Bossu by System's studied laws

The Grecian Bard's ideal picture draws.] Though Bossu is called “the best explainer of Aristotle, and one of the most learned and judicious of modern critics,” by a writer for whose opinions I have much esteem, I cannot help thinking that his celebrated Essay on Epic Poetry is very ill calculated either to guide or to inspirit a young Poet. The absurdity of his advice concerning the mode of forming the fable, by chusing a moral, inventing the incidents, and then searching history for names to suit them, has been sufficiently exposed: and as to his leading idea, concerning the design of Homer in the composition of the Iliad and Odyssey, I apprehend most poetical readers must feel that he is probably mistaken; for it is a conjectural point, and placed beyond the possibility of decision. Perhaps few individuals differ more from each other in their modes of thinking, by the force of education and of national manners, than a modern French Critic and an early Poet of Greece; yet the former will often pretend, with the most decisive air,

to lay open the sensorium of an ancient Bard, and to count every link in the chain of his ideas. Those who are most acquainted with the movements of imagination, will acknowledge the steps of this airy power to be so light and evanescent in their nature, that perhaps a Poet himself, in a few years after finishing his work, might be utterly unable to recollect the exact train of thought, or the various minute occurrences which led him to the general design, or directed him in the particular parts of his poem. But, in spite of the interval of many hundred centuries, the decisive magic of criticism can call up all the shadows of departed thought that ever existed in his brain, and display, with a most astonishing clearness, the precise state of his mind in the moment of composition.

“Homere,” says Bossu, “* voyoit les Grecs pour qui il écrivoit, diviséz en autant d’etats qu’ils avoient de villes considerables : chacune faisoit un corps a part & avoit sa forme de gouvernement independamment de toutes les autres. Et toute-fois ces etats differens estoient souvent obligéz de se reünir comme en un seul corps contre leurs ennemis communs. Voila sans doute deux sortes de gouvernemens bien differens, pour etre commodement reunis en un corps de morale, & en un seul poëme.

“Le poëte en a donc fait deux fables separées. L’une est pour toute la Grece reünie en un seul corps, mais composée de parties independantes les unes des autres, comme elles estoient en effet ; & l’autre est pour chaque etat particulier, tels qu’ils estoient pendant la paix, sans ce premier rapport & sans la necessité de se reünir.

“Homere a donc pris pour le fond de sa fable, cette grande verité, que la Mesintelligence des princes ruine leurs propres etats.”

On the *Odyssy* Bossu remarks, “Que la verité qui sert de fond à cette fiction, & qui avec elle compose la fable, est, que l’absence d’une personne hors de chez soi, ou qui n’a point l’œil à ce qui s’y fait, y cause de grands desordres †.”

On the mature consideration of these two moral axioms, the Critic supposes the sublime Bard to have begun his respective Poems ; for Homer, continues he, “‡ n’avoit point d’autre dessein que de former

* Livre i. chap. 8.

† Livre i. chap. 10.

‡ Livre i. chap. 13.

agrement les mœurs de ses Citoïens, en leur proposant, comme dit Horace, ce qui est utile ou pernicieux, ce qui est honnête ou ce qui ne l'est pas : - - - il n'a entrepris de raconter aucune action particulière d'Achille ou d'Ulysse. Il a fait la fable et le dessein de ses poèmes, sans penser à ces princes ; & ensuite il leur a fait l'honneur de donner leurs noms aux héros qu'il avoit feints."

The preceding remarks of this celebrated Critic have been frequently admired as an ingenious conjecture, which most happily illustrates the real purpose of Homer. To me they appear so much the reverse, that if I ventured to adopt any decided opinion on a point so much darkened by the clouds of antiquity, I should rather incline to the idea which Bossu affects to explode, and suppose the Poems of Homer intended panegyrics on the very princes whom the Critic affirms he never thought of while he was designing the works which have made them immortal.

There is a striking passage on this subject in a dialogue of Plato, which I shall enlarge upon, for two reasons : 1st, As it proves that the latter persuasion concerning the purpose of Homer was entertained at Athens ; and 2dly, Because it gives me a pleasing opportunity of supporting the learned Madame Dacier against an ill-grounded censure of a late English critic. In her Preface to the *Odyssy*, she asserts that the judgment of antiquity decided in favor of the *Iliad* ; and she appeals to part of the sentence in Plato to which I have alluded, as a proof of her assertion. Mr. Wood, in a note to the Introduction of his *Essay on Homer*, endeavours to shew the insufficiency of this proof ; and still farther, to convince us that Madame Dacier was utterly mistaken in her sense of the passage to which she appealed. If he ventures to contradict this learned lady, he does not however insult her with that insolent pertness with which she is frequently treated in the notes to Pope's *Homer* ; and which, for the honour of our English Poet, I will not suppose to be his. But though Mr. Wood endeavours to support his opinion by argument, I apprehend that he is himself mistaken, and that Madame Dacier is perfectly right in understanding the words of Socrates in their literal sense, without the least mixture of irony. It is true, indeed, that the aim of Socrates, in the course of the dialogue, is to ridicule the presumption and ignorance of the sophist Hippias, in the
most

most ironical manner; but the particular speech on which Madame Dacier founds her opinion, is a plain and simple address to Eudicus, before he enters on his debate with the Sophist. It turns on the most simple circumstance, the truth of which Eudicus could hardly be ignorant of, namely, the sentiments of his own father concerning the Poems of Homer. As these sentiments are such as I believe most admirers of the ancient Bard have entertained on the point in question, I perfectly agree with Madame Dacier in thinking that Socrates means to be literal and serious, when he says to Eudicus, Τη σὲ πατὴρ Απηναντου ηκεον οτι η Ιλιας καλλιον ειη ποιημα ὥ Ομηρῳ η η Οδυσσεια τοσούτω δε καλλιον οσω αμεινων Αχιλλευσ Οδυσσεως ειη. εκατερον γαρ των ποιηματων το μεν εις Οδυσσεια εφη πεποιησθαι, το δ' εις Αχιλλεα. Plat. Hip. min. edit. Serrani, tom. i. pag. 363. “ I have heard your father Apemantus say, that the Iliad of Homer was a finer poem than his Odyssey, and as far surpassed it in excellence as the virtue of Achilles surpassed the virtue of Ulysses; for those two poems, he said, were purposely composed in honour of those two heroes: the Odyssey, to shew the virtues of Ulysses; the Iliad, those of Achilles.” Plato's Lesser Hippias, translated by Sydenham, page 13.

Let us now return to Bossu; whose opinion concerning the purpose of Homer we may venture to oppose, supported as it is by an ingenious interpretation of some ambiguous passages in the Poetics of Aristotle; and this opposition may be grounded, not so much on the sentence which I have quoted from Plato, as on the probable conduct of Epic composition in the early ages of poetry. In such periods as produced the talents of Virgil and of Dryden, when all the arts of refined flattery were perfectly understood, we can easily conceive that they might both be tempted to compliment the reigning monarch under the mask of such heroic names as history could supply, and their genius accommodate to their purpose. We find accordingly, that the Roman Bard is supposed to have drawn a flattering portrait of his Emperor in the character of Æneas, and that the English Poet has, with equal ingenuity, enwrap the dissolute Charles the Second in the Jewish robes of King David. But in so rude an age as we must admit that of Homer to have been; when the Poet was certainly more the child of Nature than of Art; when he had no history to consult, perhaps no patron to flatter, and no critics

to elude or obey ; in such an age, may we not more naturally conjecture, that poetical composition was neither laboured in its form, nor deep in its design ? that, instead of being the slow and systematic product of political reasoning, it was the quick and artless offspring of a strong and vivifying fancy, which, brooding over the tales of tradition, soon raised them into such life and beauty, as must satisfy and enchant a warlike and popular audience, ever ready to listen with delight to the heroic feats of their ancestors.

If the learned Bossu appears unfortunate in his system concerning the purpose of Homer, he may be thought still more so in his attempt to analyze the Divinities of Virgil ; for, to throw new light on the convention of the Gods, in the opening of the tenth *Æneid*, he very seriously informs us, that “ * Venus is divine mercy, or the love of God towards virtuous men ; and Juno his justice.”

I cannot conclude these very free strictures on a celebrated author, without bearing a pleasing testimony to the virtues of the man.—Bossu is allowed by the biographers of his country to have been remarkable for the mildest manners and most amiable disposition ; totally free from that imperious and bigotted attachment to speculative opinions, which the science he cultivated is so apt to produce. He endeared himself to Boileau by a generous act of friendship, that led to an intimacy between them, which was dissolved only by the death of the former, in 1680.

NOTE V. VERSE 244.

Imputes to Virgil his own dark conceit.] As it requires much leisure to examine, and more skill to unravel an intricate hypothesis, twisted into a long and laboured chain of quotation and argument, the Dissertation on the sixth Book of Virgil remained for some time unrefuted. The public very quietly acquiesced in the strange position of its author, “ That *Æneas*’s adventure to the infernal shades, is no other than a figurative description of his initiation into the Mysteries ; and particularly a very exact one of the spectacles of the Eleusinian.” At length a superior but anonymous Critic arose, who, in one of the most judicious

and spirited essays that our nation has produced on a point of classical literature, completely overturned this ill-founded edifice, and exposed the arrogance and futility of its assuming architect. The Essay I allude to is entitled "Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the *Æneid*;" printed for Elmsly, 1770: and as this little publication is, I believe, no longer to be purchased, the curious reader may thank me for transcribing a few of its most striking passages.

Having ridiculed, with great spirit and propriety, Warburton's general idea of the *Æneid* as a political institute, and his ill-supported assertion, that both the ancient and modern poets afforded Virgil a pattern for introducing the Mysteries into this famous episode, the author proceeds to examine how far the Critic's hypothesis of initiation may be supported or overthrown by the text of the Poet. "It is," says he, "from extrinsecal circumstances that we may expect the discovery of Virgil's allegory. Every one of these circumstances persuades me, that Virgil described a real, not a mimic world, and that the scene lay in the Infernal Shades, and not in the Temple of Ceres.

"The singularity of the Cumæan shores must be present to every traveller who has once seen them. To a superstitious mind, the thin crust, vast cavities, sulphureous steams, poisonous exhalations, and fiery torrents, may seem to trace out the narrow confine of the two worlds. The lake Avernus was the chief object of religious horror; the black woods which surrounded it, when Virgil first came to Naples, were perfectly suited to feed the superstition of the people*. It was generally believed, that this deadly flood was the entrance of Hell†; and an oracle was once established on its banks, which pretended, by magic rites, to call up the departed spirits‡. *Æneas*, who revolved a more daring enterprize, addresses himself to the priests of those dark regions. Their conversation may perhaps inform us whether an initiation, or a descent to the Shades, was the object of this enterprize. She endeavours to deter the hero, by setting before him all the dangers of his rash undertaking.

* Strabo, l. v. p. 168.
p. 267. edit. Wesseling.

† Sil. Ital. l. xii.

‡ Diod. Siculus, l. iv.

——— Facilis descensus Averni ;
 Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis :
 Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
 Hoc opus, hic labor est *.

“ These particulars are absolutely irreconcilable with the idea of initiation, but perfectly agreeable to that of a real descent. That every step and every instant may lead us to the grave, is a melancholy truth. The Mysteries were only open at stated times, a few days at most in the course of a year. The mimic descent of the Mysteries was laborious and dangerous, the return to light easy and certain. In real death this order is inverted.

——— Pauci quos æquus amavit
 Jupiter, aut ardens exivit ad æthera virtus,
 Diis geniti, potuere †.

These heroes, as we learn from the Speech of Æneas, were Hercules, Orpheus, Castor and Pollux, Theseus, and Pirithous. Of all these antiquity believed, that, before their death, they had seen the habitations of the dead ; nor indeed will any of the circumstances tally with a supposed initiation. The adventure of Eurydice, the alternate life of the Brothers, and the forcible intrusion of Alcides, Theseus, and Pirithous, would mock the endeavours of the most subtle critic, who should try to melt them down into his favourite Mysteries. The exploits of Hercules, who triumphed over the King of Terrors,

Tartareum ille manu custodem in vincla petivit
 Ipseus a folio regis, traxitque trementem ‡.

was a wild imagination of the Greeks § ; but it was the duty of ancient Poets to adopt and embellish these popular traditions ; and it is the interest of every man of taste to acquiesce in *their poetical fictions*.”

“ Virgil has borrowed, as usual, from Homer his episode of the

* Æneid vi. 126.

† Ibid. vi. 129.

‡ Ibid. vi. 395.

§ Homer Odyss. l. xi. ver. 623. Apoll. Bib. l. ii. c. 5.

Infernal Shades, and, as usual, has infinitely improved what the Grecian had invented. If among a profusion of beauties I durst venture to point out the most striking beauties of the sixth Book, I should perhaps observe, 1. That after accompanying the hero through the silent realms of Night and Chaos, we see, with astonishment and pleasure, a new creation bursting upon us. 2. That we examine, with a delight which springs from the love of virtue, the just empire of Minos, in which the apparent irregularities of the present system are corrected; where the patriot who died for his country is happy, and the tyrant who oppressed it is miserable. 3. As we interest ourselves in the hero's fortunes, we share his feelings:—the melancholy Palinurus, the wretched Deiphobus, the indignant Dido, the Græcian kings, who tremble at his presence, and the venerable Anchises, who embraces his pious son, and displays to his sight the future glories of his race: all these objects affect us with a variety of pleasing sensations.

“ Let us for a moment obey the mandate of our great Critic, and consider these awful scenes as a mimic shew, exhibited in the Temple of Ceres, by the contrivance of the priest, or, if he pleases, of the legislator. Whatever was animated (I appeal to every reader of taste) whatever was terrible, or whatever was pathetic, evaporates into lifeless allegory.

———— Tenuem sine viribus umbram.

————— Dat inania verba,

Dat sine mente sonum, gressusque effingit euntis.

The end of philosophy is truth; the end of poetry is pleasure. I willingly adopt any interpretation which adds new beauties to the original; I assist in persuading myself that it is just, and could almost shew the same indulgence to the Critic's as to the Poet's fiction. But should a grave Doctor lay out fourscore pages in explaining away the sense and spirit of Virgil, I should have every inducement to believe that Virgil's soul was very different from the Doctor's.”

Having shewn, in this spirited manner, how far the hypothesis of the Critic is inconsistent with particular passages, and with the general character of the Poet, the Essayist proceeds to alledge “ two simple

reasons, which persuade him that Virgil has not revealed the secret of the Eleusinian mysteries: the first is *his ignorance*, and the second *his discretion*." The author then proves, by very ingenious historical arguments, 1st, That it is probable the Poet was never initiated himself; and, 2dly, That if he were so, it is more probable that he would not have violated the laws both of religion and of honour, in betraying the secret of the Mysteries; particularly, as that species of profanation is mentioned with abhorrence by a cotemporary Poet.

—————Vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum
Vulgârit arcana, sub iisdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum
Solvat phaselum.

HOR. l. iii. od. 2.

When Horace composed the Ode which contains the preceding passage, "the *Æneid* (continues my author) and particularly the sixth Book, were already known to the public *. The detestation of the wretch who reveals the Mysteries of Ceres, though expressed in general terms, must be applied by all Rome to the author of the sixth Book of the *Æneid*. Can we seriously suppose that Horace would have branded with such wanton infamy one of the men in the world, whom he loved and honoured the most †?

"Nothing remains to say, except that Horace was himself ignorant of his friend's allegorical meaning; which the Bishop of Gloucester has since revealed to the world. It may be so; yet, for my own part, I should be very well satisfied with understanding Virgil no better than Horace did."

Such is the forcible reasoning of this ingenious and spirited writer. I have been tempted to transcribe these considerable portions of his Work, by an idea (perhaps an ill-founded one) that the circulation of his little Pamphlet has not been equal to its merit. But if it has been in any degree neglected by our country, it has not escaped

* Donat. in Virgil. Propert. l. ii. cl. xxv. v. 66.

† Hor. l. i. od. 3. l. i. serm. v. ver. 39, &c.

the researches, or wanted the applause, of a learned and judicious foreigner. Professor Heyne, the late accurate and accomplished Editor of Virgil, has mentioned it, in his Comments to the sixth Book of the *Æneid*, with the honour it deserves. He remarks, indeed, that the Author has censured the learned Prelate with some little acrimony; "*Paullo acrius quam velis.*" But what lover of poetry, unbiassed by personal connection, can speak of Warburton without some marks of indignation? If I have also alluded to this famous Commentator with a contemptuous asperity, it arises from the persuasion that he has sullied the page of every Poet whom he pretended to illustrate; and that he frequently degraded the useful and generous profession of Criticism into a mean instrument of personal malignity: or (to use the more forcible language of his greatest antagonist) that he "invested himself in the high office of Inquisitor General and Supreme Judge of the Opinions of the Learned; which he assumed and exercised with a ferocity and despotism without example in the Republic of Letters, and hardly to be paralleled among the disciples of Dominic *." It is the just lot of tyrants to be detested; and of all usurpers, the literary despot is the least excusable, as he has not the common tyrannical plea of necessity or interest to alledge in his behalf; for the prevalence of *his edicts* will be found to sink in proportion to the arbitrary tone with which they are pronounced. The fate of Warburton is a striking instance of this important truth. What havock has the course of very few years produced in that pile of imperious criticism which he had heaped together! Many of his notes on Shakespeare have already resigned their place to the superior comments of more accomplished Critics; and perhaps the day is not far distant, when the volumes of Pope himself will cease to be a repository for the lumber of his friend. The severest enemies of Warburton must indeed allow, that several of his remarks on his Poetical Patron are entitled to preservation, by their use or beauty; but the greater part, I apprehend, are equally destitute of both: and how far the Critic was capable of disgracing the Poet, must be evident to every reader who recollects that the nonsense in the *Essay on Criticism*, where

* Letter to Warburton by a late Professor, &c. page 9. 2d edition.

Pegasus is made to *snatch a grace*, which is justly censured by Dr. War-ton, was first introduced into the poem by an arbitrary transposition of the editor.

Though arrogance is perhaps the most striking and characteristical defect in the composition of this assuming Commentator, he had certainly other critical failings of considerable importance; and it may possibly be rendering some little service to the art which he professed, to investigate the peculiarities in this singular writer, which conspire to plunge him in the crowd of those *evanescent critics* (if I may use such an expression) whom his friend Pope beheld in so clear a vision, that he seems to have given us a prophetic portrait of his own Commentator.

Critics I saw, that others' names efface,
And fix their own, with labour, in the place;
Their own, like others', soon their place resign'd,
Or disappear'd, and left the first behind.

I shall therefore hazard a few farther observations, not only on this famous Critic of our age and country, but on the two greater names of antiquity, to each of whom he has been declared superior by the partial voice of enthusiastic friendship. I wish not to offend his most zealous adherents; and, though I cannot but consider him as a literary usurper, I speak of him as a great Historian said of more exalted tyrants, *sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo*.—There seem to be three natural endowments requisite in the formation of an accomplished critic;—strong understanding, lively imagination, and refined sensibility. The first was the characteristic of Aristotle, and by the consent of all ages he is allowed to have possessed it in a superlative degree. May I be pardoned for the opinion, that he enjoyed but a very moderate portion of the *other two*? I would not absolutely say that he had neither Fancy nor Feeling; but that his imagination was *not brilliant*, and that his sensibility was not exquisite, may I think be fairly presumed from the general tenor of his prose; nor does the little relique of his poetry contradict the idea. The two qualities in which Aristotle may be supposed defective, were the very two which peculiarly distinguish Longinus; who certainly wanted not understanding, though he might not possess the philosophical

cal sagacity of the Stagyrite. When considered in every point of view, he appears the most consummate character among the Critics of antiquity. If Warburton bore any resemblance to either of these mighty names, I apprehend it must be to the former, and perhaps in imagination he was superior to Aristotle; but, of the three qualities which I have ventured to consider as requisite in the perfect Critic, I conceive him to have been miserably deficient in the last, and certainly the most essential of the three; for, as the great Commentator of Horace has philosophically and truly remarked, in a note to that Poet, “Feeling, or Sentiment, is not only the surest, but the sole ultimate arbiter of works of genius*.” A man may possess an acute understanding and a lively imagination, without being a sound Critic; and this truth perhaps cannot be more clearly shewn than in the writings of Warburton. His understanding was undoubtedly acute, his imagination was lively; but Imagination and Sentiment are by no means synonymous; and he certainly wanted those finer feelings which constitute accuracy of discernment, and a perfect perception of literary excellence. In consequence of this defect, instead of seizing the real sense and intended beauties of an author, he frequently followed the caprices of his own active fancy, which led him in quest of secret meanings and mysterious allusions; these he readily found, and his powers of understanding enabled him to dress them up in a plausible and specious form, and to persuade many readers that he was (what he believed himself to be) the restorer of genuine Criticism. As a farther proof that he was destitute of refined sensibility, I might alledge the peculiarity of his diction, which, as Dr. Johnson has very justly remarked, is coarse and impure. Perhaps it may be found, that in proportion as authors have enjoyed the quality which I suppose him to have wanted, they have been more or less distinguished by the ease, the elegance, and the beauty of their language: were I required to fortify this conjecture by examples, I should produce the names of Virgil and Racine, of Fenelon and Addison—that Addison, who, though insulted by the Commentator of Pope with the names of an indifferent Poet and a worse Critic, was, I think, as much superior to his insulter in critical taste, and in solidity of judgment, as he con-

* Notes on the Epistle to Augustus, ver. 210.

fessedly was in the harmony of his style, and in all the finer graces of beautiful composition.

NOTE VI. VERSE 257.

'Tis said by one, who, with this candid claim,

Has gain'd no fading wreath of critic fame.] These, and the six subsequent lines, allude to the following passage in Dr. Warton's Essay on Pope. "I conclude these reflections with a remarkable fact. In no polished nation, after Criticism has been much studied, and the rules of writing established, has any very extraordinary work ever appeared. This has vitibly been the case in Greece, in Rome, and in France, after Aristotle, Horace, and Boileau had written their Arts of Poetry. In our own country, the rules of the Drama, for instance, were never more completely understood than at present; yet what uninteresting, though faultless, Tragedies have we lately seen? so much better is our judgment than our execution. How to account for the fact here mentioned, adequately and justly, would be attended with all those difficulties that await discussions relative to the productions of the human mind, and to the delicate and secret causes that influence them; whether or no the natural powers be not confined and debilitated by that timidity and caution which is occasioned by a rigid regard to the dictates of art; or whether that philosophical, that geometrical, and systematical spirit so much in vogue, which has spread itself from the sciences even into polite literature, by consulting only *reason*, has not diminished and destroyed *sensitiment*, and made our poets write from and to the *head*, rather than the heart, or whether, lastly, when just models, from which the rules have necessarily been drawn, have once appeared, succeeding writers, by vainly and ambitiously striving to surpass those just models, and to shine and surprise, do not become stiff and forced, and affected in their thoughts and diction." Warton's Essay, page 209, 3d edition.—I admire this ingenious and modest reasoning; but, for the honour of that severer art, which this pleasing writer has the happy talent to enliven and embellish, I will venture to start some doubts concerning the fact itself for which he endeavours to account. Perhaps our acquaintance with those writings of Greece and Rome, which were subsequent to Aristotle and Horace, is not sufficiently perfect to decide the point either way in respect

to those countries. But with regard to France, may we not assert, that her poetical productions, which arose after the publication of Boileau's Didactic Essay, are at least equal, if not superior, to those which preceded that period? If the *Henriade* of Voltaire is not a fine Epic poem, it is allowed to be the best which the French have to boast; not to mention the dramatic works of that extraordinary and universal author. If this remarkable fact may indeed be found true, I should rather suppose it to arise from the irritable nature of the poetic spirit, so peculiarly averse to restraint and controul. The Bard who could gallop his Pegasus over a free and open plain, might be eager to engage in so pleasing an exercise; but he who observed the direction-posts so thickly and so perversely planted, that, instead of assisting his career, they must probably occasion his fall, would easily be tempted to descend from his steed, and to decline the course. Let me illustrate this conjecture by a striking fact, in the very words of the Poet just mentioned, who was by no means deficient in poetical confidence, and who has left us the following anecdote of himself, in that pleasing little anonymous work entitled, *Commentaire Historique sur les Oeuvres de l'Auteur de la Henriade*. “ Il lut un jour plusieurs chants de ce poeme chez le jeune Président de Maisons, son intime ami. On l'impatienta par des objections; il jetta son manuscrit dans le feu. Le Président Hénaut l'en retira avec peine. “ Souvenez vous (lui dit Mr. Hénaut) dans une de ses lettres, que c'est moi qui ai sauvé la *Henriade*, et qu'il m'en a coûté une belle paire de manchettes.”

To return to the Essay on Pope.—I rejoice that the amiable Critic has at length obliged the public with the conclusion of his most engaging and ingenious work: he has the singular talent to instruct and to please even those readers who are most ready to revolt from the opinion which he endeavours to establish; and he has in some degree atoned for that excess of severity which his first volume discovered, and which sunk the reputation of Pope in the eyes of many, who judge not for themselves, even far below that mortifying level to which he meant to reduce it. Had Pope been alive, to add this spirited essay to the bundle of writings against himself which he is said to have collected, he must have felt, that, like the dagger of Brutus, it gave the most painful blow, from the character of the assailant:

“ All

“ All the conspirators, save only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar;
He, only, in a general honest thought,
And common good to all, made one of them.”

Yet Pope ascended not the throne of Poetry by usurpation, but was seated there by a legal title; of which I shall speak farther in a subsequent note.

NOTE VII. VERSE 359.

His hollow'd subject, by that Law forbid,

Might still have laid in silent darkness hid.] Boileau's Art of Poetry made its first appearance in 1673, six years after the publication of Paradise Lost. The verses of the French Poet to which I have particularly alluded are these :

C'est donc bien vainement que nos auteurs déçus,
Bannissant de leurs vers ces ornemens reçus,
Pensent faire agir Dieu, ses saints, et ses prophètes,
Comme ces dieux éclos du cerveau des Poètes :
Mettent à chaque pas le lecteur en enfer ;
N'offrent rien qu' Astaroth, Belzebuth, Lucifer.
De la foi d'un Chrétien les mystères terribles
D'ornemens egayés, ne sont point susceptibles.
L'Evangile à l'esprit n'offre de tous côtés
Que penitence à faire, et tourmens mérités :
Et de vos fictions le mélange coupable,
Même à ses vérités donne l'air de la fable.
Et quel objet enfin à présenter aux yeux
Que le Diable toujours hurlant contre les cieux,
Qui de votre héros veut rabaisser la gloire,
Et souvent avec Dieu balance la victoire.

Poétique de DESPREAUX, chant iii. ver. 193, &c.

The preceding lines, which are said to have been levelled at the Clovis of Desmaretz, appear so pointed against the subject of Milton, that we might almost believe them intended as a satire on our divine Bard.

There

There is nothing in Boileau's admirable Didactic Essay so liable to objection as the whole passage concerning Epic poetry. His patronage of the old Pagan divinities, and his oblique recommendation of Classical heroes, are alike exceptionable. Even a higher name than Boileau has failed in framing precepts for the Epic Muse. The maxims delivered by Tasso himself, in his Discourse on Epic poetry, are so far from perfect, that an agreeable and judicious French critic has very justly said of him, "S'il eût mis sa theorie en pratique, son poeme n'auroit pas tant de charmes *." I am not so vain as to think of succeeding in the point where these immortal authors have failed; and I must beg my reader to remember, that the present work is by no means intended as a code of laws for the Epic poet; it is not my design

To write receipts how poems may be made.

For I think the writer who would condescend to frame this higher species of composition according to the exact letter of any directions whatever, may be most properly referred to that admirable receipt for an Epic poem with which Martinus Scriblerus will happily supply him. My serious desire is to examine and refute the prejudices which have produced, as I apprehend, the neglect of the Heroic Muse: I wish to kindle in our Poets a warmer sense of national honour, with ambition to excel in the noblest province of poesy. If my essay should excite that generous enthusiasm in the breast of any young poetic genius, so far from wishing to confine him by any arbitrary dictates of my own imagination, I should rather say to him, in the words of Dante's Virgil,

Non aspettar mio dir più, nè mio cenno
Libero, dritto, sano è tuo arbitrio,
E fallo fora non fare a suo senno.

NOTE VIII. VERSE 377.

*Who scorn'd all limits to his work assign'd,
Save by th' inspiring God who rul'd his mind.*] "On foot, with a lance in his hand, the Emperor himself led the solemn procession, and directed

• Marmontel Poetique Française.

the line, which was traced as the boundary of the destined capital; till the growing circumference was observed with astonishment by the assistants, who at length ventured to observe, that he had already exceeded the most ample measure of a great city. "I shall still advance," replied Constantine, "till he, the invisible guide who marches before me, thinks proper to stop."

GIBBON, Vol. II. page 11.

END OF THE NOTES TO THE FIRST EPISTLE.

N O T E S

N O T E S

TO THE

S E C O N D E P I S T L E.

NOTE I. VERSE 28.

WE see thy fame traduc'd by Gallic wit.] Homer, like most transcendent characters, has found detractors in every age. We learn from a passage in the life of Socrates by Diogenes Laertius, that the great Poet had, in his life-time, an adversary named Sagaris, or Syagrus; and his calumniator Zoilus is proverbially distinguished. In the Greek Anthologia, there is a sepulchral inscription on a slanderer of the sovereign Bard, which, for its enthusiastic singularity, I shall present to the reader.

Εἰς Παρθένισιν Φωκασὲν εἰς Ὀμηρὸν παροινησάντα.

Εἰ καὶ ὑπο χθονὶ κεῖται, ὅμως ἐτι καὶ κατὰ πῖσσαν
 Τὴ μιαιφύλακτον χεύατε Παρθένισ,
 Οὐτεκὰ Πιερίδεσσιν ἐνήμεσε μύρια κείνα
 Φλεγμάτα, καὶ μυσάρων ἀπλυστὴν ἐλεγών.
 Ἠλάσε καὶ μανικὸς ἐπὶ δὴ τόσσον, ὥστ' ἀγρεύσαι
 Πηλὸν Ὀδυσσεύην καὶ βᾶτον Ἰλιάδα.
 Τεῖγ' ἄρ' ἐπὶ ζεφύροισιν Ἑρηνύσιν ἀμμεσσὸν ἦπται
 Κωκυθῇ, κλισίῳ λαίμῳ ἀπαγχόμενος.

Anthologia, p. 70. Edit. Oxon. 1766.

On Parthenius the Phocensian, who calumniated Homer.

Here, though deep buried he can rail no more,
 Pour burning pitch, on base Parthenius pour;
 Who on the sacred Muses dar'd to spirt
 His frothy venom and poetic dirt:
 Who said of Homer, in his frantic scorn,
 The *Odyssey* was mud, the *Iliad* thorn:
 For this, dark Furies, in your snakes enroll,
 And through Cocytus drag the sland'rous soul.

Parthenius, say the Commentators, was a disciple of Dionysius of Alexandria, who flourished under Nero and Trajan. Erycius, the author of the inscription, is supposed to have lived in the same age. Among the modern adversaries of Homer, the French are most remarkable for their severity and injustice: nor is it surprising, that the nation which has displayed the faintest sparks of Epic fire, should be the most solicitous to reduce the oppressive splendor of this exalted luminary. The most depreciating remarks on genius, in every walk, are generally made by those who are the least able to prove its rivals; and often, perhaps, not so much from the prevalence of envious malignity, as from the want of vivid and delicate perception. The merits and the failings of Homer were agitated in France with all the heat and acrimony of a theological dispute. Madame Dacier distinguished herself in the contest by her uncommon talents and erudition: she combated for the Grecian Bard with the spirit of Minerva defending the Father of the Gods. It must however be confessed, that she sometimes overstepped the modesty of wisdom, and caught, unwarily, the scolding tone of Juno. It is indeed amusing, to observe a people, who pique themselves on their extreme politeness, and censure Homer for the gross behaviour of his Gods, engaging among themselves in a squabble concerning this very Poet, with all the unrefined animosity of his Olympian Synod. In the whole controversy there is nothing more worthy of remembrance and of praise, than the lively elegance and the pleasing good-humour of Mr. de la Motte, who, though not one of the most exalted, was certainly one of the most amiable, characters in the literary world; and made a generous return to the severity of his female antagonist, by writing an ode in her praise.

Voltaire

Voltaire has pointed out, with his usual spirit, the failings of La Motte in his Abridgement of the Iliad ; but he has frequently fallen himself into similar defects, and is equally unjust to Homer, against whom he has levelled the most bitter sarcasms, both in prose and verse. Voltaire attacking Homer, is like Paris shooting his arrow at the heel of Achilles : the two Poets are as unequal as the two ancient Warriors ; yet Homer, like Achilles, may have his vulnerable spot ; but with this happy difference, that although the shaft of ridicule, which is pointed against him, may be tinged with venom, its wound cannot be mortal. Perhaps no better answer can be made to all those who amuse themselves with writing against Homer, than the following reply of Madame Dacier to the Abbé Terrasson, who had attacked her favourite Bard in two abusive volumes :—" Que Monsieur l'Abbé Terrasson trouve Homere sot, ridicule, extravagant, ennuyeux, c'est son affaire, le public jugera si c'est un défaut à Homere de déplaire à M. l'Abbé Terrasson, ou à M. l'Abbé Terrasson de ne pas goûter Homere."

N O T E I I. V E R S E 85.

E'en Socrates himself, that purest Sage,

Imbib'd his Wisdom from thy moral page.] Dio Chrysostom, in one of his orations, has called Socrates the disciple of Homer, and drawn a short parallel of their respective merits ; observing in honour of both, "Ομηρος Παιητης γεγενεν εις υδεις αλλος, Σακρατης δε Φιλοσοφος."

DION. CHRYS. p. 559.

N O T E I I I. V E R S E 119.

How high so'er she leads his daring flight, &c.] I mean not to injure the dignity of Pindar by this assertion. Though Quintilian, in drawing the character of the Grecian Lyric Poets, has given him high pre-eminence in that choir, we may, I think, very fairly conjecture that some odes of Alcæus and Stesichorus were not inferior to those of the Theban Bard, who is said to have been repeatedly vanquished in a poetical contest by his female antagonist Corinna. The absurd jealousy of our sex concerning literary talents, has led some eminent writers to question the merits of Corinna, as Olearius has observed, in his Dissertation on the female Poets of Greece. But her glory seems to have been fully established
by

by the public memorial of her picture, exhibited in her native city, and adorned with a symbol of her victory. Pausanias, who saw it, supposes her to have been one of the handsomest women of her time; and the ingenuity of some Critics imputes her success in the poetical contest to the influence of her beauty. They have taken some liberties less pardonable with her literary reputation, and, by their curious comments on a single Greek syllable, made the sublime Pindar call his fair rival *a Sow*, though the unfortunate word *συνεκλει*, which may be twisted into that meaning, signifies, in its more obvious construction, that the Poet challenged his successful antagonist to a new trial of skill. — For a more minute account of this singular piece of criticism, I must refer the reader to the notes on Corinna, in the *Fragmenta Poetiarum*, by Wolfius. Time has left us only a few diminutive scraps of Corinna's Poetry; but Plutarch, in his *Treatise on the Glory of the Athenians*, has preserved one of her critical Bon-mots, which may deserve to be repeated. That author asserts, that Corinna instructed Pindar in his youth, and advised him to adorn his composition with the embellishments of fable. The obedient Poet soon brought her some verses, in which he had followed her advice rather too freely; when his Tutress, smiling at his profusion, *τῇ χειρὶ δειν ἔφη σπειρεῖν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ὥ τῷ βλάκῳ*.

NOTE IV. VERSE 126.

Yet may not Judgment, with severe disdain,

Slight the young Rhodian's variegated strain.] Apollonius, turnamed the Rhodian from the place of his residence, is supposed to have been a native of Alexandria; where he is said to have recited some portion of his Poem, while he was yet a youth. Finding it ill received by his countrymen, he retired to Rhodes, where he is conjectured to have polished and completed his Work, supporting himself by the profession of Rhetoric, and receiving from the Rhodians the freedom of their city. He at length returned, with considerable honour, to the place of his birth, succeeding Eratosthenes in the care of the Alexandrian Library, in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, who ascended the throne of Egypt in the year before Christ 246. That prince had been
educated

educated by the famous Aristarchus, and rivalled the preceding sovereigns of his liberal family in the munificent encouragement of learning. Apollonius was a disciple of the poet Callimachus; but their connection ended in the most violent enmity, which was probably owing to some degree of contempt expressed by Apollonius for the light compositions of his master. The learned have vainly endeavoured to discover the particulars of their quarrel. — The only Work of Apollonius which has descended to modern times, is his Poem, in four Books, on the Argonautic expedition. Both Longinus and Quintilian have assigned to this Work the mortifying character of Mediocrity; but there lies an appeal from the sentence of the most candid and enlightened Critics to the voice of Nature; and the merit of Apollonius has little to apprehend from the decision of this ultimate judge. His Poem abounds in animated description, and in passages of the most tender and pathetic beauty. How finely painted is the first setting forth of the Argo! and how beautifully is the wife of Chiron introduced, holding up the little Achilles in her arms, and shewing him to his father Peleus as he sailed along the shore! But the chief excellence in our Poet, is the spirit and delicacy with which he has delineated the passion of love in his Medea. That Virgil thought very highly of his merit in this particular is sufficiently evident from the minute exactness with which he has copied many tender touches of the Grecian Poet. Those who compare the third Book of Apollonius with the fourth of Virgil, may, I think, perceive not only that Dido has some features of Medea, but that the two Bards, however different in their reputation, resembled each other in their genius; and that they both excel in delicacy and pathos.

NOTE V. VERSE 190.

Virgil sinks loaded with their heavy praise.] Scaliger appears to be the most extravagant of all the Critics who have lavished their undistinguishing encomiums on Virgil, by asserting that he alone is entitled to the name of Poet. Poetices, lib. iii. c. 2. — Though the opinion of Spence, and other modern Critics, concerning the character of Æneas, considered as an allegorical portrait of Augustus, seems to gain ground, yet it might perhaps be easy to overturn the ingenious conjectures
and

and the fanciful reasoning by which that idea has been supported. This attempt would have the sanction of one of the most judicious Commentators of Virgil; for the learned Heyne expressly rejects all allegorical interpretation, and thinks it improbable that a Poet of so correct a judgment could have adopted a plan which must necessarily contract and cramp his powers. He even ventures to assert, that if the character of Æneas was delineated as an allegorical portrait of Augustus, the execution of it is unhappy. The strongest argument which has been adduced to support this conjecture, is founded on the ingenious interpretation of the following passage in the opening of the third Georgic:

Primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita superfit,
 Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas:
 Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas;
 Et viridi in campo templum de marmore ponam
 Propter aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
 Mincius, et tenerâ prætexit arundine ripas.
 In medio mihi Cæsar erit, templumque tenebit, &c.

These lines, in which Virgil expresses his intention of dedicating a temple to Augustus, have been considered as the *noblest allegory of ancient Poetry* *; and the great Critic who first started the idea, has expatiated, in the triumph of his discovery, on the *mysterious* beauties they contain: but the whole of this hypothesis is unfortunately built upon the rejection of three verses, which are pronounced unworthy of the Poet, and which, though found in every MS. the Critic claims a right of removing. A licence so extraordinary cannot even be justified by the talents of this accomplished writer; for if the less elegant passages of the ancient Poets might be removed at pleasure, their compositions would be exposed to the caprice of every fantastic commentator. The obvious and literal interpretation not only renders this violence unnecessary, but is more agreeable to the judgment of the Poet and the man-

* Hurd's Horace, vol. ii. page 44.

ners of his age. The custom of erecting real temples was so familiar to antiquity, that a Roman would never have suspected the edifice was to be raised only with poetical materials. We may even conjecture, from a line of Statius, that the Poet himself had a temple erected to his memory; and, without any breach of probability, we may admit his intention of giving his living Emperor such a testimony of his gratitude. This adulation, though shocking to us, was too generally justified by example to oblige the Poet to palliate it by a fiction. He had before acquiesced in the divinity of his Imperial Patron, and had expressed the idea in its full sense.

Namque erit ille mihi semper *Deus*, illius aram
Sæpe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.

Eclog. I.

Ingrederetis et votis jam *nunc* assuesce vocari.

Georg. I.

Having made such an invocation in the beginning of his Work, was his *delicacy* afterwards to be shocked, and oblige him to pay a compliment under the disguise of an obscure conceit? for that allegory must be allowed to be obscure, which had remained through so many ages unexplained. The unfortunate rejected lines, for whose elegance we do not contend, may at least be rescued from impropriety by a literal interpretation of the preceding passage; for, dismiss the conjectured allegory, and the chief objections against them remain no longer. If the phraseology be peculiar, it is at least supported by concurring MSS. The adjective *ardens* is sometimes undoubtedly joined to a word that does not denote a substance of heat or flame, as the Critic himself admits in the case of *ardentes hestes*, to which we may add the *verbum ardens* of Cicero. As to the line which is said to contain the most glaring note of illegitimacy,

Tithoni primâ quot abest ab origine Cæsar,

many reasons might induce the Poet to use the name of Tithonus, which at this distance of time it is not easy for us to conjecture. Per-

U

haps

haps he chose it to vary the expression of *Affaraci Proles*, which he had adopted in the preceding lines. The absurdity of the subject-matter, and the place in which it is introduced, that are insisted on as the principal objections, arise solely from the allegorical hypothesis: without it the construction will be plain and natural. The Poet expresses his intention of erecting a temple to Augustus, and expatiates on the magnificence with which it was to be adorned: he then returns to his present poetical subject;

Interca Dryadum sylvas saltusque sequamur :

and, having dwelt a little on that, to avoid too long a digression, very naturally resumes the praises of the Emperor, by alluding to the sublimer song which he intended to devote to him *hereafter*.

*Mox tamen ardentes accingar dicere pugnas
Cæsaris. ———*

Perhaps the important position that gave rise to this conjecture, and to others of a similar complexion, “ that the propriety of allegorical composition made the distinguished pride of ancient poetry,” is as questionable as the conjecture itself; and a diligent and judicious perusal of the ancient Poets might convince us, that simplicity was their genuine character, and that many of their allegorical beauties have originated in the fertile imagination of their commentators. Aristarchus, indeed, the celebrated model of ancient criticism, rejected with great spirit the allegorical interpretations of Homer, as we are informed by Eustathius; but the good Archbishop of Thessalonica, who, like some modern prelates, had a passion for allegory, censures the great Critic of Alexandria for his more simple mode of construction, and supposes it an injury to the refined beauties and profound wisdom of the Poet. Ἀριστάρχος μεντοι μηδεν τι των Ὀμηρων . . . αλληγερεν αξιων, ο μνον υπερβολικον τι λεγει αλλα και σεφιας μεγαλης αφαιρεται τον ποιητην. EUSTH. vol. iii. page 1300.

NOTE VI. VERSE 260.

Shall History's pen, to aid his vengeance won.] There is hardly any eminent personage of antiquity who has suffered more from detraction, both

in his literary and moral character, than the poet Lucan. His fate, indeed, seems in all points to have been peculiarly severe. His early death, at an age when few Poets have even laid the foundation of their capital work, is itself sufficient to excite our compassion and regret; but to perish by the envious tyranny of Nero, may be considered as a blessing, when compared with the more cruel misfortune of being branded with infamy in the immortal pages of Tacitus. As I am persuaded that the great Historian has inadvertently adopted the grossest calumny against our Poet, I shall most readily assign my reasons for thinking so. It may first be proper to give a short sketch of Lucan's life.—He was the son of Anneus Mela, the youngest brother of Seneca; and though born at Corduba, was conveyed to Rome at the age of eight months: a circumstance, as his more indulgent critics observe, which sufficiently refutes the censure of those who consider his language as provincial. At Rome he was educated under the Stoic Cornutus, so warmly celebrated by his disciple Persius the Satirist, who was the intimate friend of our Poet. In the close of his education Lucan is said to have passed some time at Athens. On his return to Rome he rose to the office of *Quæstor*, before he had attained the legal age. He was afterwards inrolled among the *Augurs*; and married a lady of noble birth, of whose amiable character I shall speak more at large in a subsequent note. Lucan had for some time been admitted to familiarity with Nero, when the Emperor chose to contend for poetical honours by the public recital of a poem he had composed on *Niohe*; and some verses of this imperial production are supposed to be preserved in the first *Satire* of Persius. Lucan had the hardiness to repeat a poem on *Orpheus*, in competition with that of Nero; and, what is more remarkable, the judges of the contest were just and bold enough to decide against the Emperor. From hence Nero became the persecutor of his successful rival, and forbade him to produce any poetry in public. The well-known conspiracy of *Piso* against the tyrant soon followed; and Tacitus, with his usual sarcastic severity, concludes that Lucan engaged in the enterprize from the poetical injuries he had received: a remark which does little credit to the candour of the Historian; who might have found a much nobler, and, I will add, a more probable motive for his conduct, in the generous ardor of his character, and his passionate adora-

tion of freedom. In the sequel of his narration, Tacitus alledges a charge against our Poet, which, if it were true, must lead us to detest him as the most abject of mankind. The Historian asserts, that Lucan, when accused of the conspiracy, for some time denied the charge; but, corrupted at last by a promise of impunity, and desirous to atone for the tardiness of his confession, accused his mother Atilla as his accomplice. This circumstance is so improbable in itself, and so little consonant to the general character of Lucan, that some writers have treated it with contempt, as a calumny invented by Nero to vilify the object of his envious abhorrence. But the name of Tacitus has given such an air of authority to the story, that it may seem to deserve a more serious discussion, particularly as there are two subsequent events related by the same Historian, which have a tendency to invalidate the accusation so injurious to our Poet. The events I mean are, the fate of Annæus, and the escape of Atilla, the two parents of Lucan. The former died in consequence of an accusation brought against him, after the death of his son, by Fabius Romanus, who had been intimate with Lucan and forged some letters in his name, with the design of proving his father concerned in the conspiracy. These letters were produced to Nero, who sent them to Annæus, from an eager desire, says Tacitus, to get possession of his wealth. From this fact two inferences may be drawn, according to the different lights in which it may be considered:—If the accusation against Annæus was just, it is clear that Lucan had not betrayed his father, and he appears the less likely to have endangered by his confession the life of a parent, to whom he owed a still tenderer regard:—If Annæus was not involved in the conspiracy, and merely put to death by Nero for the sake of his treasure, we may the more readily believe, that the tyrant who murdered the father from avarice, might calumniate the son from envy. But the escape of Atilla affords us the strongest reason to conclude that Lucan was perfectly innocent of the abject and unnatural treachery, of which Tacitus has supposed him guilty. Had the Poet really named his mother as his accomplice, would the vindictive and sanguinary Nero have spared the life of a woman, whose family he detested, particularly when other females were put to death for their share in the conspiracy? That Atilla was not in that number, the Historian himself informs us in the following remarkable sentence,

Atilla

Atilla mater Annæi Lucani, sine absolutione, sine supplicio, dissimulata; thus translated by Gordon: "The information against Atilla, the mother of Lucan, was dissembled; and, without being cleared, she escaped unpunished."

The preceding remarks will, I hope, vindicate to every candid mind the honour of our Poet; whose firmness and intrepidity of character are indeed very forcibly displayed in that picture of his death which Tacitus himself has given us. I shall present it to the English reader in the words of Gordon: — Lucan, "while his blood issued in streams, perceiving his feet and hands to grow cold and stiffen, and life to retire by little and little to the extremities, while his heart was still beating with vital warmth, and his faculties no wise impaired, recollected some lines of his own, which described a wounded soldier expiring in a manner that resembled this. The lines themselves he rehearsed; and they were the last words he ever uttered." The Annals of Tacitus, Book xv. — The critics differ concerning the verses of the *Pharsalia* which the author quoted in so memorable a manner. I shall transcribe the two passages he is supposed to have repeated, and only add that Lipsius contends for the latter.

Sanguis erant lacrymæ: quæcunque foramina novit
Humor, ab his largus manat cruor: ora redundant,
Et patulæ nares: sudor rubet: omnia plenis
Membra fluunt venis: totum est pro vulnere corpus.

Lib. ix. 814.

Now the warm blood at once, from every part,
Ran purple poison down, and drain'd the fainting heart.
Blood falls for tears; and o'er his mournful face
The ruddy drops their tainted passage trace.
Where'er the liquid juices find a way,
There streams of blood, there crimson rivers stray.
His mouth and gushing nostrils pour a flood,
And e'en the pores ouze out the trickling blood;
In the red deluge all the parts lie drown'd,
And the whole body seems one bleeding wound.

Rowe.

Scinditur avulsus ; nec sicut vulnere sanguis
 Emicuit lentus ; ruptis cadit undique venis,
 Discursusque animæ, diversa in membra meatis,
 Interceptus aquis.

Lib. iii. v. 638.

No single wound the gaping rupture seems,
 Where trickling crimson wells in slender streams ;
 But, from an op'ning horrible and wide,
 A thousand vessels pour the bursting tide :
 At once the winding channel's course was broke,
 Where wand'ring life her mazy journey took ;
 At once the currents all forgot their way,
 And lost their purple in the azure sea.

ROWE.

Such was the death of Lucan, before he had completed his twenty-seventh year. If his character as a man has been injured by the Historian, his poetical reputation has been treated not less injuriously by the Critics. Quintilian, by a frivolous distinction, disputes his title to be classed among the Poets ; and Scaliger says, with a brutality of language disgraceful only to himself, that he seems rather to *bark* than to *sing*. But these insults may appear amply compensated, when we remember, that in the most polished nations of modern Europe the most elevated and poetic spirits have been his warmest admirers ; that in France he was idolized by Corneille, and in England translated by Rowe.—The severest censures on Lucan have proceeded from those who have unfairly compared his language to that of Virgil : but how unjust and absurd is such a comparison ! it is comparing an uneven block of porphyry, taken rough from the quarry, to the most beautiful superficies of polished marble. How differently should we think of Virgil as a poet, if we possessed only the verses which he wrote at that period of life when Lucan composed his *Pharsalia* ! In the disposition of his subject, in the propriety and elegance of diction, he is undoubtedly far inferior to Virgil : but if we attend to the bold originality of his design, and to the vigour of his sentiments ; if we consider the *Pharsalia* as the rapid

rapid and uncorrected sketch of a young poet, executed in an age when the spirit of his countrymen was broken, and their taste in literature corrupted, it may justly be esteemed as one of the most noble and most wonderful productions of the human mind.

NOTE VII. VERSE 293.

As Lesbos paid to Pompey's lovely Wife.] Pompey, after his defeat at Pharfalia, proceeded to Lesbos, as he had left his wife Cornelia to the protection of that island; which received the unfortunate hero with a sublime generosity. The Lesbians entreated him to remain amongst them, and promised to defend him. Pompey expressed his gratitude for their fidelity, but declined the offer, and embarked with Cornelia. The concern of this gallant people on the departure of their amiable guest is thus described by Lucan:

———— dixit; mœstamque carinæ
 Imposuit comitem. Cunctos mutare putares
 Tellurem patriæque solum: sic litore toto
 Plangitur, infestæ tenduntur in æthera dextræ;
 Pompeiumque minus, cujus fortuna dolorem
 Moverat, ast illam, quam toto tempore belli
 Ut civem videre suam, discedere cernens
 Ingemuit populus; quam vix, si castra mariti
 Victoris peteret, siccis dimittere matres
 Jam poterant oculis: tanto devinxit amore
 Hos pudor, hos probitas, castique modestia vultus.

Lib. viii. v. 146.

He ceas'd; and to the ship his partner bore,
 While loud complainings fill the sounding shore;
 It seem'd as if the nation with her pass'd,
 And banishment had laid their island waste.
 Their second sorrows they to Pompey give;
 For her as for their citizen they grieve:
 E'en though glad victory had call'd her thence,
 And her Lord's bidding been the just pretence,

The

The Lesbian matrons had in tears been drown'd,
 And brought her weeping to their wat'ry bound :
 So was she lov'd, so winning was her grace,
 Such lowly sweetness dwelt upon her face. ROWE.

NOTE VIII. VERSE 296.

Let Argentaria on your canvass shine.] Polla Argentaria was the daughter of a Roman Senator, and the wife of Lucan. She is said to have transcribed and corrected the three first books of the *Pharsalia*, after the death of her husband. It is much to be regretted that we possess not the poem which he wrote on the merits of this amiable and accomplished woman ; but her name is immortalized by two surviving Poets of that age. The veneration which she paid to the memory of her husband, is recorded by Martial ; and more poetically described in that pleasing and elegant little production of Statius, *Genethliacon Lucani*, a poem which I the more readily commend, as I may be thought by some readers unjust towards its author, in omitting to celebrate his *Thebaid*. I confess, indeed, the miscellaneous poems of Statius appear to me his most valuable work : in most of these there is much imagination and sentiment, in harmonious and spirited verse. The little poem which I have mentioned, on the anniversary of Lucan's birth, is said to have been written at the request of Argentaria. The Author, after invoking the poetical deities to attend the ceremony, touches with great delicacy and spirit on the compositions of Lucan's childhood, which are lost, and the *Pharsalia*, the production of his early youth ; he then pays a short compliment to the beauty and talents of Argentaria, laments the cruel fate which deprived her so immaturity of domestic happiness ; and concludes with the following address to the shade of Lucan :

At tu, seu rapidum poli per axem
 Famæ curribus arduis levatus,
 Qua surgunt animæ potentiores,
 Terras despicias, et sepulchra rides :
 Seu pacis meritum nemus reclusæ
 Felix Elysiis tenes in oris,
 Quo Pharsalica turba congregatur ;

Et te nobile carmen insonantem
 Pompeii comitantur et Catones :
 Tu magna facer et superbus umbra
 Nescis Tartaron, et procul nocentum
 Audis verbera, pallidumque visa
 Matris lampade respicis Neronem.
 Adfis lucidus ; et vocante Polla
 Unum, quæso, diem deos silentum
 Exores ; solet hoc patere limen
 Ad nuptas redeuntibus maritis.
 Hæc te non thiasis procax dolosis
 Falsi numinis induit figuras ;
 Ipsum sed colit, et frequentat ipsum
 Imis altius insitum medullis ;
 Ac solatia vana subministrat
 Vultus, qui simili notatus auro
 Stratis prænitet, excubatque somno
 Securæ. Procul hinc abite mortes ;
 Hæc vitæ genitalis est origo ;
 Cedat luctus atrox, genisque manent
 Jam dulces lacrymæ, dolorque festus
 Quicquid fleverat ante nunc adoret.

But you, O! whether to the skies
 On Fame's triumphant car you rise,
 (Where mightier souls new life assume)
 And mock the confines of the tomb ;
 Or whether in Elysium blest
 You grace the groves of sacred rest,
 Where the Pharsalian heroes dwell ;
 And, as you strike your Epic shell,
 The Pompeys and the Catos throng
 To catch the animating song ;
 Of Tartarus the dread controul
 Binds not your high and hallow'd soul ;

Distant you hear that wailing coast,
 And see the guilty Nero's ghost
 Grow pale with anguish and affright,
 His mother flashing on his sight.

Be present to your Polla's vows,
 While to your honour'd name she bows!
 One day let your intreaties gain
 From those who rule the shadowy train!
 Their gates have op'd to bless a wife,
 And given a husband back to life.
 In you the tender Fair invites
 No fancied god with frantic rites;
 You are the object of her prayers,
 You in her inmost heart she bears:
 And, stamp'd on mimic gold, your head
 Adorns the faithful mourner's bed,
 And sooths her eyes before they close,
 The guardian of her chaste repose.

Away with all funereal state!
 From hence his nobler life we date:
 Let Mourning change the pang severe
 To fond Devotion's grateful tear!
 And festal grief, its anguish o'er,
 What it lamented, now adore!

I cannot close this note without observing, that the preceding verses have a strong tendency to prove, that Lucan was perfectly innocent in regard to the accusation which I have examined before. Had he been really guilty of basely endangering the life of his mother, it is not probable that his wife would have honoured his memory with such enthusiastic veneration, or that Statius, in verses designed to do him honour, would have alluded to *the mother* of Nero. The Reader will pardon my recurring to this subject, as it is pleasing to make use of every argument which may remove so odious and unjust a stain from a manly and exalted character.

N O T E S

T O T H E

T H I R D E P I S T L E.

NOTE I. VERSE 36.

AND smiles of triumph bid his mortal pang.] An allusion to *ridens moriar*, the close of the celebrated Northern Ode, by the Danish king Regner Lodbrog; a translation of which is inserted in the curious little volume of Runic poetry, printed for Doddsley, 1763.

Bartholin, in his admirable Essay on the Causes which inspired the Danes with a Contempt of Death, affirms, that it was customary with the Northern warriors to sing their own exploits in the close of life. He mentions the example of a hero, named Hallmundus, who being mortally wounded, commanded his daughter to attend while he composed a poem, and to inscribe it on a tablet of wood. BARTHOLIN. Lib. i. cap. 10.

NOTE II. VERSE 60.

And galls the ghastly Tyrant with her lash.] The poetry of Provence contains many spirited satires against the enormities of the Clergy. The most remarkable, is the bold invective of the Troubadour Guillaume Figueira, in which he execrates the avarice and the cruelty of Rome. The Papal cause found a female Poet to defend it: Germonda of Montpellier composed a poetical reply to the satire of Figueira. See MILLOT's Hist. des Troubadours, vol. ii. p. 455.

NOTE III. VERSE 76.

Struck with ill-fated zeal the Latian lyre.] There never was a century utterly destitute of ingenious and elegant Poets, says the learned Polycarp Leyser, after having patiently traced the obscure progress of Latin poetry through all the dark ages. Indeed the merit of some Latin Poets, in a period that we commonly suppose involved in the grossest barbarism, is singularly striking; many of these are of the Epic kind, and, as they describe the manners and customs of their respective times, a complete review of them might form a curious and entertaining work. I shall briefly mention such as appear most worthy of notice.

Abbo, a Parisian monk, of the Benedictine order, wrote a poem on the siege of Paris by the Normans and the Danes, at which he was present, in the year 886: it is printed in the second volume of Duchesne's *Script. Francorum*; and, though it has little or no poetical merit, may be regarded as an historical curiosity. The following lines, addressed to the city of Paris, in the beginning of the work, may serve as a specimen of its language:

Dic igitur præpulchra polis, quod Danca munus
 Libavit tibimet, soboles Plutonis amica,
 Tempore quo præsul domini et dulcissimus heros
 Gozlinus temet pastorque benignus alebat!
 Hæc inquit, miror, narrare potest aliquisne?
 Nonne tuis idem vidisti oculis? refer ergo:
 Vidi equidem, jussisque tuis parebo libenter.

Leyser has confounded this Poet with another of this name; but Fabricius has corrected the mistake, in his *Bibliotheca Latina mediæ et infimæ Ætatis*.

Guido, Bishop of Amiens from the year 1058 to 1076, wrote an Heroic poem on the exploits of William the Conqueror, in which, according to Ordericus Vitalis, he imitated both Virgil and Statius. William of Apulia composed, at the request of Pope Urban the II^d, a poem, in five books, on the actions of the Normans in Sicily, Apulia, and Calabria, to the death of Robert Guiscard their prince; addressing his

his work to the son of that hero. It was written between the years 1080 and 1099; first printed in 1582, 4to.; and again in Muratori's Script. Ital. Du Cange, in his Notes to the Alexiad of the Princess Anna Comnena, has illustrated that history by frequent and long quotations from William of Apulia; but though the learned Critic gives him the title of Scriptor Egregius, his poetry appears to me but a few degrees superior to that of the Monk Abbo, whom I have just mentioned. The Reader may judge from the following passage, which I select not only as a specimen of the Author's style, but as it shews that the wives of these martial Princes shared with them in all the perils of war.

Uxor in hoc bello Roberti forte sagitta
 Quadam læsa fuit, quæ vulnere territa, nullam
 Dum sperabat opem, se pene subegerat hosti,
 Navigio cujus se commendare volebat,
 Instantis metuens vicina pericula lethi:
 Hanc deus eripuit, fieri ludibria nolens
 Matronæ tantæ tam nobilis et venerandæ.

The Princess Comnena has also celebrated the fortitude which this Heroine, whose name was Gaita, displayed in the battle; and it is remarkable, that the royal female Historian describes the noble Amazon more poetically than the Latin Poet.

Gualfredo, an Italian, who succeeded to the bishoprick of Siena in the year 1080, and died in 1127, wrote an Heroic poem on the expedition of Godfrey of Boulogne, which is said to be still preserved in MS. at Siena. I believe Gualfredo is the first Poet, in point of time, who treated of the happy subject of the Crusades; which was afterwards embellished by two very elegant writers of Latin verse, Iscanus and Gunther, of whom I shall presently speak, and at length received its highest honour from the genius of Tasso. There is also an early Latin poem on this subject, the joint production of two writers, named Fulco and Ægidius, whom the accurate Fabricius places in the beginning of the 13th century; the title of the work is *Historia Gestorum Viæ nostri Temporis Hierosolymitanæ*. It is printed in the fourth volume of Duchesne's Script. Franc. and with considerable additions in the third volume of Anecdota

Anecdota Edmundi Martene. I transcribe part of the opening of this poem, as the curious reader may have a pleasure in comparing it with that of Tasso.

Ardor inest, inquam, sententia fixaque menti
 Versibus et numeris transmittere posteritati
 Qualiter instinctu deitatis, et auspice cultu
 Est aggressa via memorando nobilis actu,
 Qua sacrosancti violantes jura sepulchri
 Digna receperunt meriti commercia pravi.
 Inque suis Francis antiqua resurgere Troja
 Cæpit, et edomuit Christo contraria regna.

I will only add the portrait of Godfrey :

Inclutus ille ducum Godefridus culmen honosque,
 Omnibus exemplum bonitatis militiæque,
 Sive hasta jaculans æquaret Parthica tela,
 Cominus aut feriens terebraret ferrea scuta,
 Seu gladio pugnans carnes refecaret et ossa,
 Sive eques atque pedes propelleret agmina densa,
 Hic inimicitiis cunctis sibi conciliatis
 Cunctis possessis pro Christi pace relictis
 Arripuit callem Christum sectando vocantem.

The poem closes with the capture of Jerusalem.

Laurentius of Verona, who flourished about the year 1120, wrote an Heroic poem, in seven books, entitled, *Rerum in Majorica Pisfanorum*. Edidit Ughellus, tom. 3. *Italiæ sacræ*.

But in merit and reputation, these early Latin Poets of modern time are very far inferior to Philip Gualtier de Chatillon, who seems to have been the first that caught any portion of true poetic spirit in Latin verse. He was Provost of the Canons of Tournay * about the year 1200, according to Mr. Warton, who has given some specimens of his style in the second Dissertation prefixed to his admirable History of English Poetry. I shall therefore only add, that the best edition of his *Alexandreid*, an Heroic

* Fabricius calls him *Episcopus Magalonensis*. Bib. Lat. tom. ii. p. 255.

poem in ten books on Alexander the Great, was printed at Leyden, 4to, 1558.

The superior merit of Josephus Iſcanus, or Joſeph of Exeter, has been alſo diſplayed by the ſame judicious Encomiaſt, in the Diſſertation I have mentioned; nor has he failed to commemorate two Latin Epic Poets of the ſame period, and of conſiderable merit for the time in which they lived—Gunter, and William of Bretagny; the firſt was a German monk, who wrote after the year 1108, and has left various hiſtorical and poetical works; particularly two of the Epic kind—Solymarium, a poem on the taking of Jeruſalem by Godfrey of Bulloign; and another, entitled Ligurius, on the exploits of the Emperor Frederick Barbaroſſa, which he completed during the life of that Prince. The firſt was never printed; of the latter there have been ſeveral editions, and one by the celebrated Melancthon, in 1569. That his poetical merit was conſiderable in many reſpects, will appear from the following verſes, in which he ſpeaks of himſelf.

Hoc quoque me famæ, ſi deſint cætera, ſolum
Conciliare poteſt, quod jam per multa latentes
Sæcula, nec clauſis prodire penatibus auſas
Pierides vulgare paro, priſcumque nitorem
Reddere carminibus, tardosque citare poetas

William of Bretagny was preceptor to Pierre Charlot, natural ſon of Philip Auguſtus, King of France, and addreſſed a poem to his pupil, entitled Karlotis, which is yet unpublished; but his greater work, called Philippis, an Heroic poem in twelve books, is printed in the collections of Duchefne and Pithæus; and in a ſeparate 4to volume, with a copious commentary by Barthius. Notwithſtanding the praiſes beſtowed on this Author by his learned Commentator, who prefers him to all his contemporaries, he appears to me inferior in poetic ſpirit to his three rivals, Gualtier de Chatillon, Iſcanus, and Gunther. Yet his work is by no means deſpicable in its ſtyle, and may be conſidered as a valuable picture of the times in which he lived; for he was himſelf engaged in many of the ſcenes which he deſcribes. His profeſt deſign is to celebrate the exploits of Philip Auguſtus; and he cloſes his poem with the death

death of that Monarch, which happened in 1223. He addresses his work, in two separate poetical dedications, to Lewis, the successor of Philip, and to Pierre Charlot his natural son, who was Bishop of Noyon in 1240, and died 1249. He seems to have been excited to this composition by the reputation of Gualtier's *Alexandreid*; to which he thus alludes, in the verses addressed to Lewis :

Gesta ducis Macedum celebri describere versu
Si licuit Gualtere tibi, quæ sola relatu
Multivago docuit te vociferatio famæ.

Cur ego quæ novi, proprio quæ lumine vidi,
Non ausim magni magnalia scribere regis,
Qui nec Alexandro minor est virtute, nec illo
Urbi Romulæ totum qui subdidit orbem?

He takes occasion also, in two other parts of his poem, to pay a liberal compliment to Gualtier, to whom, in poetical ability, he confesses himself inferior; but this inferiority his admirer Barthius will not allow. Of their respective talents the reader may judge, who will compare the passage which Mr. Warton has cited from the *Alexandreid*, with the following lines, in which William of Bretagny uses the very simile of his predecessor, comparing his hero Philip to a young lion.

Rex dolet ereptum comitem sibi, frendit, et iræ
Occultare nequit tectos sub pectore motus,
Nam rubor in vultu duplicatus prodit aperte
Quam gravis illustrem trahit indignatio mentem.
Qualiter in Lybicus spumante leunculo rictu
Saltibus ungue ferox, et dentibus asper aduncis
Fortis et horrifonis anno jam pene secundo,
Cui venatoris venabula forte per armos
Descendere levi stringentia vulnere corpus,
Colla rigens hirsuta jubis descevit in hostem
Jam retrocedentem, nec cum tetigisse volentem,
Cum nihil ex facto referat nisi dedecus illo.

Nec

Nec mora nec requies, quin jam deglutiat ipsum,
 Ni prudens hostis prætenta cuspide scuto
 Unguibus objecto, dum dat vestigia retro,
 In loca se retrahat non irrumpenda leoni.
 Sic puer in comitem rex debacchatur et ipsum
 Subsequitur presso relegens vestigia gressu.

I will add the following passage from the eleventh Book, as it contains an animated portrait, and a simile more original than the preceding.

At lævo in cornu, qui nulli marte secundus,
 Bolonides pugnæ insistit, cui fraxinus ingens
 Nunc implet dextram, vix ulli bajula, qualem
 In Bacchi legimus portasse Capanea cunas,
 Quam vix fulmineo dejecit Jupiter ictu:
 Nunc culter vitæ impatiens, nunc sanguine pugni
 Mucro rubens; gemina e sublimi vertice fulgens
 Cornua conus agit, superasque eduxit in auras
 E costis assumpta nigris, quas faucis in antro
 Branchia balenæ Britici colit incola ponti;
 Ut qui magnus erat magnæ superaddita moli
 Majorem faceret phantastica pompa videri.
 Ac velut in saltus scopulosa Bieria saltu
 Præcipiti mittit ingenti corpore cervum,
 Cujus multifidos numerant a cornibus annos,
 Mense sub Octobri nondum Septembre peracto,
 Annua quando novis Venus incitat ignibus illum,
 Cursitat in cervos ramosa fronte minores,
 Omnibus ut pulsus victor sub tegmine fagi
 Connubio cervam solus sibi subdat amatam.
 Haud secus e peditum medio, quibus ipse rotundo
 Ut castro cauta se circumsepserat arte,
 Prosilien volat in Thomam, Robertigenasque
 Drocaram Comitem, Belvacenumque Philippum
 Bolonides.——

William of Bretagne had an immediate successor in Latin poetry, who appears to have at least an equal portion of poetical spirit; the name of this Author is Nicholas de Brai, who wrote an Heroic poem on the actions of Louis the VIIIth, after the death of that Monarch, and addressed it to William of Auvergne, who was Bishop of Paris from the year 1228 to 1248. As a specimen of his descriptive power, I select the following lines, which form part of a long description of a Goblet presented to the King on his accession :

———— Parant intrare palatia regis
Magnifici cives, gratissima dona ferentes,
Tegmina quos ornant variis insculpta figuris ;
Et patrem patriæ jucunda voce salutant,
Et genibus flexis præsentant ditia dona.

— — — — —
Offertur crater, quem si sit credere dignum
Perditus ingenio fabricavit Mulciber auro ;
Margine crateris totus depingitur orbis,
Et series rerum brevibus distincta figuris :
Illic pontus erat, tellus et pendulus aer,
Ignis ad alta volans cœli supereminet illis :
Quatuor in partes orbis distinguitur, ingens
Circuit oceanus immensis fluctibus orbem.
Ingenio natura suo duo lumina fecit
Fixa tenore poli, mundi famulantia rebus.

The Author proceeds to describe Thebes and Troy, as they are figured on this superb Goblet ; and concludes his account of the workmanship with the four following lines, of peculiar beauty for the age in which they appeared :

Martis adulterium resupino margine pinxit
Mulciber, et Venerem laqueis cum Marte ligavit ;
Pluraque cælasset sub margine, sed pudor illi
Obstat, et ingentis renovatur causa doloris.

This Poem, which the author seems to have left imperfect, is printed in the fifth volume of Duchesne's Script. Francorum.—England is said to have produced another Heroic Poet of considerable merit, who celebrated in Latin verse the exploits of Richard the First, and who was called Gulielmus Peregrinus, from his having attended that Prince to the Holy Land. Leland mentions him by the name of Gulielmus de Canno, and Pits calls him Poetarum sui temporis apud nostrates facile Princeps; but I do not find that his Work was ever printed; nor do the several biographical writers who speak of him, inform us where it exists in MS.

In Italy the Latin language is supposed to have been cultivated with still greater success, and the restoration of its purity is in great measure ascribed to Albertino Mussato, whose merits were first displayed to our country by the learned author of the Essay on Pope.—Mussato was a Paduan, of high rank and great talents, but unfortunate. He died in exile, 1329, and left, besides many smaller Latin pieces, an Heroic Poem, De Gestis Italarum post Henricum VII. Cæsarem, seu de Obsidione Domini Canis Grandis de Verona circa mœnia Paduanæ civitatis et Conflictu ejus. — Quadrio, from whom I transcribe this title, says it is printed in the tenth volume of Muratori. Vossius, who speaks of him as an Historian, asserts that he commanded in the war which is the subject of his Poem.

In a few years after the death of Mussato, Petrarch received the laurel at Rome, for his Latin Epic poem, entitled Africa; a performance which has sunk so remarkably from the high reputation it once obtained, that the great admirer and encomiast of Petrarch, who has published three entertaining quarto volumes on his life, calls it “Un ouvrage sans chaleur, sans invention, sans interet, qui n'a pas meme le merite de la versification & du style, & dont il est impossible de soutenir la lecture.—I must observe, however, that Tasso, in his Essay on Epic Poetry, bestows a very high encomium on that part of Petrarch's Latin poem in which he celebrates the loves of Sophonisba and Masinissa; and indeed the censure of this amiable French writer, who in other points has done ample justice to the merits of Petrarch, appears to me infinitely too severe. There are many passages in this neglected Poem conceived with great force and imagination, and expressed with equal elegance of lan-

guage. I shall select some verses from that part of it which has been honoured by the applause of Tasso. The following lines describe the anguish of the young Numidian Prince, when he is constrained to abandon his lovely bride:

Volvitur inde thoro (quoniam sub pectore pernox
 Sævit amor, lacerantque truces præcordia curæ)
 Uritur, invigilant mæror, metus, ira, furorque,
 Sæpe & absentem lacrymans dum stringit amicam
 Sæpe thoro dedit amplexus, et dulcia verba.
 Postquam nulla valent violento fræna dolori,
 Incipit, et longis solatur damna querelis.
 Cura mihi nimium, vita mihi dulcior omni
 Sophonisba vale: non te mea cura videbo
 Leniter æthereos posthac componere vultus,
 Effusosque auro religantem ex more capillos.
 Dulcia, non cælum mulcentia verba, Deosque,
 Oris odorati, secretaque murmura carpat.
 Solus ero gelidoque infernam membra cubili,
 Atque utinam socio componat amica sepulchro,
 Et simul hic vetitos, illic concorditer annos
 Contingat duxisse mihi fors optima busti.
 Si cinis amborum commixtis morte medullis
 Unus erit, Scipio nostros non scindet amores.
 O utinam infernis etiam nunc una latebris
 Umbra simus, liceat pariter per claustra vagari
 Myrtea, nec nostros Scipio disjungat amores.
 Ibimus una ambo flentes, et passibus iisdem
 Ibimus, æterno connexi fœdere, nec nos
 Ferreus aut æquos Scipio interrumpet amores.

The well-known catastrophe of the unfortunate Sophonisba is related with much poetical spirit. The close of her life, and her first appearance in the regions of the dead, are peculiarly striking.

*Illa manu pateramque tenens, & lumina cælo
 Attollens, Sol alme, inquit, superique valete!*

Mafniſſa

Mafiniffa vale, noſtri memor : inde malignum
Ce u ſitiens haurit non mota fronte venenum,
Tartareaſque petit violentus ſpiritus umbras.

Nulla magis Stygios mirantium obſeſſa corona
Umbra lacus ſubiit, poſtquam diſiſa triformis
Partibus haud æquis ſtetit ingens machina mundi.
Obtuitu attonito ſtabant horrentia circum
Agmina Pœnarum, ſparſoque rigentia villo
Eumenidum tacitis inhiabant riſtibus ora.
Regia viſ oculis inerat, pallorque verendus
Et vetus egregia majeſtas fronte manebat.
Indignata tamen ſuperis, irataque morti
Ibat et exiguo deſigens lumina flexu.

With Petrarch I may cloſe this cuſory review of the neglected authors who wrote Heroic poems in Latin, during the courſe of the dark ages.—A peculiar circumſtance induces me to add another name to the preceding liſt. John, Abbot of Peterborough, in the reign of Edward the Third, wrote an Heroic poem, entitled *Bellum Navarrenſe*, 1366 de Petro rege Aragoniæ, & Edwardo Principe. This performance, containing five hundred and ſixty verſes, is ſaid to be preſerved in MS. in the Bodleian Library ; and I have thought it worthy of notice, becauſe it treats of the very ſubject on which Dryden informs us he had once projected an Epic poem.

Of the many Latin compoſitions of the Epic kind, which later times have produced, the *Chriſtiad* of Vida, the *Sarcotis* of Maſſenius, and the *Conſtantine* of Mambrun, appear to me the moſt worthy of regard ; but even theſe are ſeldom peruſed : and indeed the Poet, who in a poliſhed age prefers the uſe of a dead language to that of a living one, can only expect, and perhaps only deſerves, the attention of a few curious ſequeſtered ſtudents.

NOTE IV. VERSE 81.

Thy daring Dante his wild Vision sung.] Dante Allighieri was born at Florence, in May 1265, of an ancient and honourable family. Boccaccio, who lived in the same period, has left a very curious and entertaining Treatise, on the Life, the Studies, and Manners of this extraordinary Poet; whom he regarded as his master, and for whose memory he professed the highest veneration. This interesting biographer relates, that Dante, before he was nine years old, conceived a passion for the lady whom he has immortalized in his singular Poem. Her age was near his own; and her name was Beatrice, the daughter of Folco Portinari, a noble citizen of Florence. Of this fair one the best accounts are obscure. Some refining commentators have even denied her corporeal existence; affirming her to be nothing more or less than Theology. But we may question if Theology was ever the mistress of so young a lover. The passion of Dante, however, like that of his successor Petrarch, seems to have been of the chaste and Platonic kind, according to the account he has himself given of it, in one of his early productions, entitled *Vita Nuova*; a mixture of mysterious poetry and prose, in which he mentions both the origin of his affection and the death of his mistress, who, according to Boccaccio, died at the age of twenty-four. The same author asserts, that Dante fell into a deep melancholy in consequence of this event, from which his friends endeavoured to raise him, by persuading him to marriage. After some time he followed their advice, and repented it; for he unfortunately made choice of a lady who bore some resemblance to the celebrated Xantippe. The Poet, not possessing the patience of Socrates, separated himself from her with such vehement expressions of dislike, that he never afterwards admitted her to his presence, though she had borne him several children.—In the early part of his life he gained some credit in a military character; distinguishing himself by his bravery in an action where the Florentines obtained a signal victory over the citizens of Arezzo. He became still more eminent by the acquisition of civil honours; and at the age of thirty-five he rose to be one of the chief magistrates of Florence, when that dignity was conferred by the suffrages of the people. From this ex-
altation

altation the Poet himself dated his principal misfortunes, as appears from the fragment of a letter quoted by Lionardo Bruni, one of his early biographers, where Dante speaks of his political failure with that liberal frankness which integrity inspires.—Italy was at that time distracted by the contending factions of the Ghibellins and the Guelphs: the latter, among whom Dante took an active part, were again divided into the Blacks and the Whites. Dante, says Gravina, exerted all his influence to unite these inferior parties; but his efforts were ineffectual, and he had the misfortune to be unjustly persecuted by those of his own faction. A powerful citizen of Florence, named Corso Donati, had taken measures to terminate these intestine broils, by introducing Charles of Valois, brother to Philip the Fair, King of France. Dante, with great vehemence, opposed this disgraceful project, and obtained the banishment of Donati and his partizans. The exiles applied to the Pope (Boniface the VIIIth) and by his assistance succeeded in their design. Charles of Valois entered Florence in triumph, and those who had opposed his admission were banished in their turn. Dante had been dispatched to Rome as the ambassador of his party, and was returning, when he received intelligence of the revolution in his native city. His enemies, availing themselves of his absence, had procured an iniquitous sentence against him, by which he was condemned to banishment, and his possessions were confiscated. His two enthusiastic biographers, Boccaccio and Manetti, express the warmest indignation against this injustice of his country. Dante, on receiving the intelligence, took refuge in Siena, and afterwards in Arezzo, where many of his party were assembled. An attempt was made to surprize the city of Florence, by a small army which Dante is supposed to have attended: the design miscarried, and our Poet is conjectured to have wandered to various parts of Italy, till he found a patron in the great Cap della Scala, Prince of Verona, whom he has celebrated in his Poem. The high spirit of Dante was ill suited to courtly dependence; and he is said to have lost the favour of his Veroneze patron by the rough frankness of his behaviour. From Verona he retired to France, according to Manetti; and Boccaccio affirms that he disputed in the Theological Schools of Paris with great reputation. Bayle questions his visiting Paris at this period of his life, and thinks it improbable, that a man, who had been one of

the chief magistrates of Florence, should condescend to engage in the public squabbles of the Parisian Theologists; but the spirit both of Dante, and the times in which he lived, sufficiently account for this exercise of his talents; and his residence in France at this season is confirmed by Boccaccio, in his life of our Poet, which Bayle seems to have had no opportunity of consulting.

The election of Henry Count of Luxemburgh to the empire, in November 1308, afforded Dante a prospect of being restored to his native city, as he attached himself to the interest of the new Emperor, in whose service he is supposed to have written his Latin treatise *De Monarchia*, in which he asserted the rights of the Empire against the encroachments of the Papacy. In the year 1311, he instigated Henry to lay siege to Florence; in which enterprize, says one of his Biographers, he did not appear in person, from motives of respect towards his native city. The Emperor was repulsed by the Florentines; and his death, which happened in the succeeding year, deprived Dante of all hopes concerning his re-establishment in Florence.

After this disappointment, he is supposed to have passed some years in roving about Italy in a state of poverty and distress, till he found an honourable establishment at Ravenna, under the protection of Guido Novello da Polenta, the lord of that city, who received this illustrious exile with the most endearing liberality, continued to protect him through the few remaining years of his life, and extended his munificence to the ashes of the Poet.

Eloquence was one of the many talents which Dante possessed in an eminent degree. On this account he is said to have been employed on fourteen different embassies in the course of his life, and to have succeeded in most of them. His patron Guido had occasion to try his abilities in a service of this nature, and dispatched him as his ambassador to negotiate a peace with the Venetians, who were preparing for hostilities against Ravenna. Manetti asserts that he was unable to procure a public audience at Venice, and returned to Ravenna by land, from his apprehensions of the Venetian fleet; when the fatigue of his journey, and the mortification of failing in his attempt to preserve his generous patron from the impending danger, threw him into a fever, which terminated in death on the 14th of September 1321. He died, however,
in

in the palace of his friend, and the affectionate Guido paid the most tender regard to his memory. This magnificent patron, says Boccacio, commanded the body to be adorned with poetical ornaments, and, after being carried on a bier through the streets of Ravenna by the most illustrious citizens, to be deposited in a marble coffin. He pronounced himself the funeral oration, and expressed his design of erecting a splendid monument in honour of the deceased: a design which his subsequent misfortunes rendered him unable to accomplish. At his request, many epitaphs were written on the Poet: the best of them, says Boccacio, by Giovanni del Virgilio of Bologna, a famous author of that time, and the intimate friend of Dante. Boccacio then cites a few Latin verses, not worth transcribing, six of which are quoted by Bayle as the composition of Dante himself, on the authority of Paul Jovius. In 1483 Bernardo Bembo, the father of the celebrated Cardinal, raised a handsome monument over the neglected ashes of the Poet, with the following inscription:

Exigua tumuli Danthes hic forte jacebas
 Squallenti nulli cognita pæne situ ;
 At nunc marmoreo subnixus conderis arcu,
 Omnibus et cultu splendidiore nites :
 Nimirum Bembus, Musis incensus Etruscis,
 Hoc tibi, quem in primis hæ coluere, dedit.

Before this period the Florentines had vainly endeavoured to obtain the bones of their great Poet from the city of Ravenna. In the age of Leo the Xth they made a second attempt, by a solemn application to the Pope, for that purpose; and the great Michael Angelo, an enthusiastic admirer of Dante, very liberally offered to execute a magnificent monument to the Poet. The hopes of the Florentines were again unsuccessful. The particulars of their singular petition may be found in the notes to Condivi's Life of Michael Angelo.

The person and manners of Dante are thus represented by the descriptive pen of Boccacio: — “ Fu adunque questo nostro Poeta di Mezzana statura; e poichè alla matura età fu pervenuto, andò alquanto gravetto, ed era il suo andar grave, e mansueto, di onestissimi panni sempre vestito,

in quello abito, che era alla sua matura età convenevole; il suo volto fu lungo, il naso aquilino, gli occhi anzi grossi, che piccioli, le mascelle grandi, e dal labbro di sotto, era quel di sopra avanzato; il colore era bruno, i capelli, e la barba spessi neri e crespi, e sempre nella faccia malinconico e pensoso—Ne costumi pubblici e domestici mirabilmente fu composto e ordinato; più che niuno altro cortese e civile; nel cibo
e nel

A GUIDO CAVALCANTI.

Guido, vorrei, che tu, e Lappo, ed io,
 Fossimo presi per incantamento,
 E messi ad un vassel, ch'ad ogni vento
 Per mare andasse a voler vostro e mio;
 Sicché fortuna, od altro tempo rio,
 Non ci potesse dare impedimento:
 Anzi vivendo sempre in noi talento
 Di stare insieme crescesse 'l disio.
 E monna Vanna, e monna Bice poi,
 Con quella fu il numer delle trenta,
 Con noi ponesse il buono incantatore:
 E quivi ragionar sempre d'amore:
 E ciascuna di lor fosse contenta,
 Siccome io credo che facciamo noi.

These lively verses were evidently written before the Poet lost the object of his earliest attachment, as she is mentioned by the name of Bice. At what time, and in what place, he executed the great and singular work which has rendered him immortal, his numerous Commentators seem unable to determine. Boccaccio asserts, that he began it in his thirty-fifth year, and had finished seven Cantos of his *Inferno* before his exile; that in the plunder of his house, on that event, the begin-
 5 ning

THIRD EPISTLE.

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c nel poto fu modestissimo.—Though Dante is described as much inclined to melancholy, and his genius particularly delighted in the gloomy and sublime, yet in his early period of life he seems to have possessed all the lighter graces of sprightly composition, as appears from the following airy and sportive sonnet :

IMITATION.

Henry ! I wish that you, and Charles, and I,
 By some sweet spell within a bark were plac'd,
 A gallant bark with magic virtue grac'd,
 Swift at our will with every wind to fly :
 So that no changes of the shifting sky,
 No stormy terrors of the watery waste,
 Might bar our course, but heighten still our taste
 Of sprightly joy, and of our social tie :
 Then, that my Lucy, Lucy fair and free,
 With those soft nymphs on whom your souls are bent,
 The kind magician might to us convey,
 To talk of love throughout the live-long day ;
 And that each fair might be as well content
 As I in truth believe our hearts would be.

ning of his poem was fortunately preserved, but remained for some time neglected, till its merit being accidentally discovered by an intelligent Poet named Dino, it was sent to the Marquis Maroello Malespina, an Italian nobleman, by whom Dante was then protected. The Marquis restored these lost papers to the Poet, and intreated him to proceed in a work which opened in so promising a manner. To this incident we are probably indebted for the poem of Dante, which he must have continued

under all the disadvantages of an unfortunate and agitated life. It does not appear at what time he completed it; perhaps before he quitted Verona, as he dedicated the *Paradise* to his Veronese patron.—The Critics have variously accounted for his having called his poem *Comedia*. He gave it that title, said one of his sons, because it opens with distress, and closes with felicity. The very high estimation in which this production was held by his country, appears from a singular institution. The republic of Florence, in the year 1373, assigned a public stipend to a person appointed to read lectures on the poem of Dante: Boccacio was the first person engaged in this office; but his death happening in two years after his appointment, his Comment extended only to the seventeen first Cantos of the *Inferno*. The critical dissertations that have been written on Dante are almost as numerous as these to which Homer has given birth: the Italian, like the Grecian Bard, has been the subject of the highest panegyric, and of the grossest invective. Voltaire has spoken of him with that precipitate vivacity, which so frequently led that lively Frenchman to insult the reputation of the noblest writers. In one of his entertaining letters, he says to an Italian Abbé, “ Je fais grand cas du courage, avec lequel vous avez osé dire que Dante étoit un fou, et son ouvrage un monstre — — — Le Dante pourra entrer dans les bibliothèques des curieux, mais il ne sera jamais lu.” But more temperate and candid Critics have not been wanting to display the merits of this original Poet. Mr. Warton has introduced into his last volume on English Poetry, a judicious and spirited summary of Dante’s performance. We have several versions of the celebrated story of Ugolino; but I believe no entire Canto of Dante has hitherto appeared in our language, though his whole work has been translated into French, Spanish, and Latin verse. The three Cantos which follow, were translated a few years ago, to oblige a particular friend. The Author has since been solicited to execute an entire translation of Dante; but the extreme inequality of this Poet would render such a work a very laborious undertaking, and it appears very doubtful how far such a version would interest our country. Perhaps the reception of these Cantos may discover to the Translator the sentiments of the public. At all events, he flatters himself that the ensuing portion of a celebrated poem may afford some pleasure from its novelty, as he has endeavoured to give the English reader an idea of
Dante’s

Dante's peculiar manner, by adopting his triple rhyme; and he does not recollect that this mode of versification has ever appeared before in our language; it has obliged him of course to make the number of translated lines correspond exactly with those of the original. The difficulties attending this metre will sufficiently shew themselves, and obtain some degree of indulgence from the intelligent and candid reader.

DELL' INFERNO.

CANTO I.

NEL mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Che la diritta via era smarrita:
E quanto à dir qual era, è cosa dura,
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte,
Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura.
Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte:
Ma per trattar del ben, ch'ì vi trovai,
Dirò dell' altre cose, ch'ì v'ho scorte.
I non so ben ridir, com'ì v'entrai;
Tant'era pien di sonno in su quel punto,
Che la verace via abbandonai.
Ma po' ch'ì fui al piè d'un colle giunto,
Là ove terminava quella valle,
Che m'avea di paura il cor compunto;
Guarda'in alto, e vidi le sue spalle
Vestite già de' raggi del pianeta,
Che mena dritto altrui per ogni calle.
Allor fu la paura un poco queta,
Che nel lago del cor m'era durata,
La notte, ch'ì passai con tanta pietà.
E come quei, che con lena affannata
Uscito fuor del pelago alla riva,
Si volge all'aqua perigliosa, e guata;
Così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva,
Si vols' à retro à rimirar lo passo,
Che non lasciò giammai persona viva.

THE INFERNO OF DANTE.

CANTO I.

IN the mid season of this mortal strife,
I found myself within a gloomy grove,
Far wandering from the ways of perfect life :
The place I know not, where I chanc'd to rove ,
It was a wood so wild, it wounds me fore
But to remember with what ills I strove :
Such still my dread, that death is little more.
But I will tell the good which there I found.
High things 'twas there my fortune to explore :
Yet how I enter'd on that secret ground
I know not to explain ; so much in sleep
My mortal senses at that hour were drown'd.
But when I reach'd the bottom of a steep,
That rose to terminate the dreary vale,
Which made cold terrors thro' my bosom creep,
I look'd on high, where breath'd a purer gale,
And saw the summit glisten with that ray
Which leads the wand'rer safe o'er hill and dale.
This soon began to chase those fears away,
Which held my struggling spirit bound so fast
During that night of darkness and dismay :
And, as th' exhausted wretch, by fortune cast
Safe from the stormy deep upon the shore,
Turns to survey the perils he has past,
So turn'd my soul, ere yet its dread was o'er,
Back to contemplate that mysterious strait
Where living mortal never past before.

Arising

Poi ch'ebbi riposato il corpo lasso,
 Ripresi via per la piaggia deserta,
 Sì che 'l piè fermo sempre era 'l più basso.
 Ed ecco, quasi al cominciar dell' erta,
 Una lonza leggiera e presta molto,
 Che di pel maculato era coperta.
 E non mi si partia dinanzi al volto;
 Anz' impediva tanto 'l mio cammino,
 Ch' i fu per ritornar più volte volto.
 Temp' era dal principio del mattino,
 E 'l sol montava in su con quelle stelle,
 Ch' eran con lui, quando l'amor divino
 Mosse da prima quelle cose belle
 Sì ch' a bene sperar m'era cagione
 Di quella fera la gaietta pelle,
 L' ora del tempo, e la dolce stagione:
 Ma non sì, che paura non mi desse
 La vista, che m'apparve d'un leone.
 Questi pareva, che contra me venesse
 Con la test'alta, e con rabbiosa fame,
 Sì che pareva, che l'aer ne temesse:
 Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
 Sembiava carca con la sua magrezza,
 E molte genti fe' già viver grame.
 Questa mi porse tanto di gravezza
 Con la paura, ch' usciva di sua vista,
 Ch' i perde' la speranza dell' altezza.
 E quale è quei, che volentieri acquista,
 E ginge 'l tempo, che perder lo face,
 Che 'n tutt' i suoi pensier piange, e s'attrista;
 Tal me fece la bestia senza pace,
 Che venendomi 'ncontro, a poco a poco
 Mi ripingeva là, dove 'l sol tace.
 Mentre ch' i rovinava in basso loco,
 Dinanzi gli occhi mi si fu offerto
 Chi per lungo silenzio parca fioco.

Arising soon from this repose elate,
Up the rough steep my journey I begin,
My lower foot sustaining all my weight.
Here, while my toilsome way I slowly win,
Behold a nimble Panther springs to fight !
And beauteous spots adorn his motley skin :
He at my presence shew'd no signs of fright,
But rather strove to bar my doubtful way ;
I often turn'd, and oft resolv'd on flight.
'Twas now the chearful hour of rising day ;
The sun advanc'd in that propitious sign
Which first beheld his radiant beams display
Creation's charms, the work of love divine !
So that I now was rais'd to hope sublime,
By these bright omens of a fate benign,
The beauteous Beast and the sweet hour of prime.
But soon I lost that hope ; and shook yet more
To see a Lion in this lonely clime :
With open jaws, athirst for human gore,
He rush'd towards me in his hungry ire ;
Air seem'd to tremble at his savage roar.
With him, inflam'd with every fierce desire,
A famish'd She-wolf, like a spectre, came ;
Beneath whose gripe shall many a wretch expire.
Such sad oppression seiz'd my sinking frame,
Such horror at these strange tremendous fights,
My hopes to climb the hill no longer aim ;
But, as the wretch whom lucre's lust incites,
In the curst hour which scatters all his wealth,
Sinks in deep sorrow, dead to all delights,
So was I robb'd of all my spirit's health,
And to the quarter where the sun grows mute,
Driven by this Beast, who crept on me by stealth.
While I retreated from her dread pursuit,
A manly figure my glad eyes survey'd,
Whose voice was like the whisper of a lute.

Quando i' vidi costui nel gran deserto ;
 Miserere di me gridai a lui,
 Qual che tu sii, od ombra, od uomo certo.
 Risposemi : non uomo, uomo già fui,
 E li parenti miei furon Lombardi,
 E Mantovani, per patria amendui.
 Nacqui sub Julio, ancorche fosse tardi,
 E vissi a Roma, sotto 'l buono Agusto,
 Al tempo degli Dei falsi e bugiardi.
 Poeta fui, e cantai di quel giusto
 Figlioul d'Anchise, che venne da Troja,
 Poichè 'l superbo Ilion fu combusto.
 Ma tu, perchè ritorni à tanta noja ?
 Perchè non sali il dilettoso monte,
 Ch'è principio e cagion di tutta gioja ?
 Or se' tu quel Virgilio, e quella fonte,
 Che spande di parlar sì largo fiume ?
 Risposi lui, con vergognosa fronte.
 Oh degli altri poeti onore e lume,
 Vagliami 'l lungo studio, e'l grande amore,
 Che m'han fatto cercar lo tuo volume.
 Tu se' lo mio maestro, e'l mio autore :
 Tu se' solo colui, da cu'io tolsi
 Lo bello stile, che m'ha fatto onore.
 Vedi la bestia, per cu'io mi volsi :
 Ajutami da lei, famoso saggio,
 Ch'ella mi fa tremar le vene e i polsi.
 A te convien tenere altro viaggio,
 Rispose, poichè lagrimar mi vide,
 Se vuoi campar d'esto luogo selvaggio :
 Che questa bestia, per la qual tu gride,
 Non lascia altrui passar per la sua via,
 Ma tanto lo 'mpedisce, che l'uccide :
 Ed ha natura sì malvagia e ria,
 Che mai non empie la bramosa voglia,
 E, dopo 'l pasto, ha più fame, che pria.

Molti.

Soon as I saw him in this dreary glade,
 Take pity on me, to this form I cry'd,
 Be thou substantial man, or fleeting shade!—
 A man I was (the gracious form reply'd)
 And both my parents were of Lombard race;
 They in their native Mantua liv'd and dy'd:
 I liv'd at Rome, rich in a monarch's grace,
 Beneath the good Augustus' letter'd reign,
 While fabled Gods were serv'd with worship base.
 A Bard I was: the subject of my strain
 That just and pious Chief who sail'd from Troy,
 Sinking in ashes on the sanguine plain.
 But thou, whom these portentous fights annoy,
 Why'dost thou turn? why not ascend the mount,
 Source of all good, and summit of all joy!—
 Art thou that Virgil? thou! that copious fount
 Of richest eloquence, so clear, so bright?
 I answer'd, blushing at his kind account;
 O thou! of Poets the pure guide and light!
 Now let me profit by that fond esteem
 Which kept thy song for ever in my sight!
 Thou art my Master! thou my Bard supreme,
 From whom alone my fond ambition drew
 That purer style which I my glory deem!
 O! from this Beast, so hideous to the view,
 Save me! O save me! thou much-honour'd Sage!
 For growing terrors all my power subdue.—
 A different road must lead thee from her rage,
 (He said, observant of my starting tears)
 And from this wild thy spirit disengage;
 For that terrific Beast, which caus'd thy fears,
 Worries each wretch that in her road she spies,
 Till death at length, his sole relief, appears.
 So keen her nature, sleep ne'er seals her eyes;
 Her ravenous hunger no repast can sate;
 Food only serves to make its fury rise.

Molti son gli animali, a cui s'ammoglia;
 E più faranno ancora, infin che 'l veltro
 Verrà, che la farà morir di doglia.
 Questi non ciberà terra, nè peltro,
 Ma sapienza, e amore, e virtute,
 E sua nazione farà tra Feltro e Feltro:
 Di quell' umile Italia fia salute,
 Per cui morì la Vergine Cammilla,
 Eurialo, e Turno, e Niso di ferute:
 Questi la caccerà per ogni villa,
 Fin ch'è l'avrà rimessa nello 'nferno,
 La onde 'nvidia prima dipartilla.
 Ond' io, per lo tuo me', penso e discerno,
 Che tu mi segui, ed io farò tua guida,
 E trarrotti di qui, per luogo eterno,
 Ov' udirai le disperate strida,
 Vedrai gli antiche spiriti dolenti,
 Che la seconda morte ciascun grida:
 E poi vedrai color, che son contenti
 Nel fuoco; perchè speran di venire,
 Quando che sia, alle beate genti:
 Alle qua' poi se tu vorrai salire,
 Anima fia, a ciò di me più degna:
 Con lei ti lascerò nel mio partire:
 Che quello mperador, che lassù regna,
 Perch' i' fu' ribellante alla sua legge,
 Non vuol che'n sua città per me si vegna.
 In tutte parti impera, e quivi regge:
 Quivi è la sua cittade, e l'alto seggio:
 O felice colui, cu' ivi elegge!
 Ed io a lui: Poeta, i' ti rechieggio,
 Per quello Iddio, che tu non conoscesti,
 Acciocch' i' fugga questo male e peggio,
 Che tu mi meni, là dov'or dicesti,
 Sì ch' i' vegga la porta di san Pietro,
 E color che tu fai cotanto mesti.
 Allor si mossè, ed io li tenni dietro.

She calls from different animals her mate ;
 And long shall she produce an offspring base,
 Then from a mighty victor meet her fate.
 Nor pomp nor riches shall that victor grace,
 But truth, and love, and all excelling worth ;
 He from his rescu'd land all ill shall chase,
 The saviour of the realm that gives him birth,
 Of Italy, for whom Camilla fell,
 And Turnus, fighting for his native earth,
 And Ninus, with the friend he lov'd so well.
 The Beast this victor to that den shall drive
 Whence Envy let her loose, her native hell !
 Now for thy good, well-pleas'd, I will contrive,
 That by my aid, while I thy steps controul,
 Thou shalt in safety at those realms arrive
 Where thou shalt see the tortur'd spirits roll,
 And hear each mourn his miserable fate,
 Calling for death on his immortal soul.
 Then shalt thou visit those, who in a state
 Of purifying fire are still content,
 And for their promis'd heaven submissive wait :
 If to that heaven thy happy course is bent,
 A worthier guard will soon my place supply ;
 A purer spirit, for thy guidance sent !
 For that Immortal Power, who rules on high,
 Because I ne'er his perfect laws have known,
 His sacred presence will to me deny.
 There in the realms of light he fix'd his throne ;
 There o'er the world Almighty Lord he reigns :
 O blest the servant whom he deigns to own !—
 Poet (I answer'd) by thy living strains,
 And by that God, tho' not reveal'd to thee,
 That I may 'scape from these, and heavier pains,
 Be thou my leader, where thy way is free !
 So that my eyes St. Peter's gate may find,
 And all the wonders of the deep may see !
 He led, and I attentive march'd behind.

CANTO II.

LO giorno se n'andava, e l'aer bruno
 Toglieva gli animai, che sono 'n terra,
 Dalle fatiche loro: ed io sol' uno
 M'apparecchiava a sostener la guerra,
 Sì del cammino, e sì della pietate,
 Che ritrarrà la mente, che non erra.
 O Muse, o alto 'ngegno, or m'ajutate:
 O mente, che scrivesti ciò ch'ì vidi,
 Qui si parrà la tua nobilitate.
 Io cominciai: Poeta, che mi guidi,
 Guarda la mia virtù, s'ell' è possente,
 Prima ch' all' alto passo tu mi fidi.
 Tu dici, che di Silvio lo parente,
 Corrutibile ancora, ad immortale
 Secolo andò, e fu sensibilmente.
 Però se l'avversario d'ogni male
 Cortese fu, pensando l'alto effetto,
 Ch' uscìr dovea di lui, e 'l chi, e 'l quale,
 Non pare indegno ad uomo d'intelletto;
 Ch' ei fu dell'alma Roma, e di suo 'mpero,
 Nell' empireo ciel, per padre, eletto:
 La quale, e 'l quale (a voler dir lo vero)
 Fur stabiliti, per lo loco santo,
 U' siede il successor del maggior Piero.
 Per questa andata, onde li dai tu vanto,
 Intese cose, che furon cagione
 Di sua vittoria, e del papale ammanto.
 Andovvi poi lo vas d'elezione,
 Per recarne conforto, a quella fede,
 Ch' è principio alla via di salvazione.

CANTO II.

THE day was sinking, and the dusky air
On all the animals of earth bestow'd
Rest from their labours. I alone prepare
To meet new toil, both from my dreary road,
And pious wish to paint in worthy phrase
The Unerring Mind, and his divine abode.
O sacred Muses! now my genius raise!
O Memory, who writest what I saw,
From hence shall spring thy ever-during praise!
Kind Poet (I began, with trembling awe)
Mark if my soul be equal to this aim!
Nor into scenes too hard my weakness draw!
Thy Song declares, the Chief of pious fame
Appear'd among the blest, retaining still
His mortal senses and material frame;
Yet, if the great Opposer of all ill
Shew'd grace to him, as knowing what and who
Should from him rise, and mighty things fulfil,
Most worthy he appear'd, in Reason's view,
That Heaven should chuse him as the Roman Sire,
Source of that empire which so widely grew,
Mark'd in its growth by the angelic choir
To be the seat where Sanctity should rest,
And Peter's heirs yet raise dominion higher.
From his dark journey, in thy Song express,
He learn'd mysterious things; from whence arose
Rome's early grandeur and the Papal vest.
To Paul, while living, heaven's high powers disclose
Their secret bliss, that he may thence receive
Strength in that faith from which salvation flows.

But

Ma io, perchè venirvi? o chi 'l concede?
 Io non Enea, io non Paolo sono:
 Me degno à ciò, nè io, nè altri il crede.
 Perchè se del venire i' m'abbandono,
 Temo che la venuta non sia folle:
 Se' favio, e 'ntendi me', ch'ì non ragiono.
 E quale è quei, che disvuol ciò ch'e' volle,
 E per nuovi pensier cangia proposta,
 Si che del cominciar tutto si tolle;
 Tal mi fec' io' in quella oscura costa:
 Perchè, pensando, consumai la 'mpresa,
 Che fu, nel cominciar, cotanto tosta.
 Se io ho ben la tua parola intesa,
 Rispose del magnanimo quell' ombra,
 L'anima tua è da viltate offesa:
 La qual molte fiate l'uomo ingombra,
 Sì che d'onrata impresa lo rivolge,
 Come falso veder bestia, quand' ombra.
 Da questa tema acciocché tu ti solve,
 Dirotti, perch' i' venni, e quel, ch'io'ntesi,
 Nel primo punto, che di te mi dolse.
 Io era tra color, che son sospesi,
 E donna mi chiamò beata e bella,
 Tal che di comandare i' la richiesi.
 Lucevan gli occhi suoi più, che la stella:
 E cominciommi a dir soave e piana,
 Con angelica voce, in sua favella:
 O anima cortese Mantovana,
 Di cui la fama ancor nel mondo dura,
 E durerà, quanto 'l moto lontana:
 L'amico mio, e non della ventura,
 Nella deserta spiaggia è impedito
 Sì nel cammin, che volto è per paura:
 E temo, che non sia già sì smarrito,
 Ch'io mi sia tardi al soccorso levata,
 Per quel, ch' io ho di lui, nel Cielo, udito.

But how may I this high exploit atchieve ?
 I'm not Æneas, nor the holy Paul :
 Of this unworthy I myself believe :
 If then I follow at thy friendly call,
 Midway perchance my trembling soul may sink :
 Wise as thou art, thou may'st foresee my fall.
 Now as a man who, shudd'ring on the brink
 Of some great venture, sudden shifts his mind,
 And feels his spirit from the peril shrink ;
 So, in this scene of doubt and darkness join'd,
 Wavering I wasted thought in wild affright,
 And the first ardour of my soul resign'd.
 If thy faint words I understand aright,
 (Reply'd the mighty and magnanimous shade)
 Those mists of fear have dimm'd thy mental sight,
 Which oft the seat of human sense invade,
 And make blind mortals from high deeds recoil,
 By Terror's airy phantasies betray'd :
 But, that such fears thy soul no more may foil,
 I'll tell thee whence I came ; at whose request ;
 When first I pitied thy uncertain toil.
 From the suspended host in which I rest,
 A lovely Spirit call'd me, fair as light ;
 Eager I waited on her high behest ;
 While eyes beyond the solar radiance bright,
 And with the sweetness of an angel's tongue,
 Thus her soft words my willing aid invite :
 O ever gentle shade, from Mantua sprung !
 Whose fame unfading on the earth shall last
 As long as earth in ambient air is hung ;
 My friend, whose love all base desire surpast,
 In yon drear desert finds his passage barr'd,
 And compass'd round with terrors stands aghast ;
 And much I fear, beset with dangers hard,
 He may be lost beyond all friendly reach,
 And I from heaven descend too late a guard.

Or muovi, e con la tua parola ornata,
 E con ciò, che ha mestieri al suo campare,
 L'ajuta sì, ch'ì' ne sia consolata.

I' son Beatrice, che ti faccio andare :
 Vegno di loco, ove tornar disio :
 Amor mi mosse, che mi fa parlare.

Quando farò dinanzi al signor mio,
 Di te mi loderò sovente a lui :
 Tacette allora, e poi comincia' io :

O donna di virtù, sola, per cui,
 L'umana spezie eccede ogni contento
 Da quel ciel, ch' ha minor li cerchi suoi :

Tanto m'aggrada 'l tuo comandamento,
 Che l'ubbidir, se già fosse, m'è tardi :
 Più non t'è uopo aprirmi 'l tuo talento.

Ma dimmi la cagion, che non ti guardi
 Dello scender quaggiuso, in questo centro,
 Dall' ampio loco, ove tornar tu ardi.

Da che tu vuoi saper cotanto addentro,
 Dirotti brevemente, mi rispose,
 Perch'ì' non temo di venir qua entro.

Temer si dee di sole quelle cose,
 Ch' hanno potenza di fare altrui male :
 Dell' altre nò, che non son paurose.

Io son fatta da Dio, sua mercè, tale,
 Che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
 Nè fiamma d'esto 'ncendio non m'assale.

Donna è gentil nel ciel, che si compiangi
 Di questo 'mpedimento, ov' i' ti mando,
 Sì che duro giudicio lassù frange.

Questa chiese Lucia in suo dimando,
 E disse : Ora abbisogna il tuo fedele
 Di te, ed io a te lo raccomando.

Lucia nimica di ciascun crudele
 Si mosse, e venne al loco, dov' i' era,
 Che mi sedea con l'antica Rachele :

Disse,

But go! and with thy soft soul-soothing speech,
 And all the aid thy wisdom may inspire,
 The ways of safety to this wanderer teach!
 My name is Beatrice: the heavenly quire
 For this I left, tho' ever left with pain;
 But love suggested what I now desire.
 When I the presence of my lord regain,
 On thee my praises with delight shall dwell.
 So spake this angel, in her heavenly strain.
 Bright Fair, (I cry'd) who didst on earth excel
 All that e'er shone beneath the lunar sphere,
 And every mind to virtuous love impel!
 Had I e'en now perform'd the task I hear,
 That swift performance I should think too slow:
 Nor needs there more; your gracious will is clear:
 Yet how you venture, I would gladly know,
 From those pure realms, to which again you fly,
 So near the center of eternal woe.
 What you require (she said, in kind reply)
 I briefly will explain: how thus I dare,
 Unconscious of alarm, these depths to try.
 From these things only springs our fearful care,
 By which our hapless friends may suffer ill;
 But not from other; for no fear is there.
 Such am I form'd, by Heaven's most gracious will,
 That torture cannot touch my purer frame,
 E'en where fierce fires his flaming region fill.
 A gentle spirit (Lucia is her name)
 In heaven laments the hardships of my friend,
 For whom I ask your aid: to me she came,
 And kindly bade me to his woes attend:
 Behold (she said) thy servant in distress!
 And I his safety to thy care commend.
 Lucia, the friend of all whom ills oppress,
 Me, where I sat with pensive Rachel, sought,
 In heavenly contemplation's deep recess:

Disse, Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,
 Che non soccorri quei, che t'amò tanto;
 Ch' uscìo per te della volgare schiera?
 Non odi tu la pieta del suo pianto,
 Non vedi tu la morte, che 'l combatte
 Su la fiumana, ove 'l mar non ha vanto?
 Al mondo non fur mai persone ratte
 A far lor pro, ed a fuggir lor danno,
 Com' io, dopo cotai parole fatte,
 Venni quaggiù dal mio beato scanno,
 Fidandomi nel tuo parlare onesto,
 Ch' onora te, e quei, ch'udito l'hanno.
 Poscia che m'ebbe ragionato questo,
 Gli occhi lucenti, lagrimando, volse:
 Perchè mi fece del venir più presto:
 E venni à te così, com' ella volse:
 Dinanzi a quella fiera ti levai,
 Che del bel monte il corto andar ti tolse.
 Dunque che è? perchè, perchè ristai?
 Perchè tanta viltà nel cuore allette?
 Perchè ardire e franchezza non hai?
 Poscia che tai tre donne benedette
 Curan di te, nella corte del Cielo,
 E'l mio parlar tanto ben t'impromette?
 Quale i fioretti, dal notturno gielo,
 Chinati e chiusi, poi che'l sol gl'imbianca,
 Si drizzan tutti aperti in loro stelo,
 Tal mi fec' io, di mia virtute stanca:
 E tanto buono ardire al cuor mi corse,
 Ch' i' cominciai, come persona franca:
 O pietosa colei, che mi soccorse,
 E tu cortese, ch'ubbidisti tosto
 Alle vere parole, che ti porse!
 Tu m'hai con desiderio il cuor disposto
 Sì al venir, con le parole tue,
 Ch' i' son tornato nel primo proposto.

In mercy's name (she cry'd) thus lost in thought,
 Seest thou not him who held thy charms so dear,
 Whom Love to rise above the vulgar taught ?
 And dost thou not his lamentation hear,
 Nor see the horror, which his strength impairs,
 On yon wide torrent, with no haven near ?
 Never was mind, intent on worldly cares,
 So eager wealth to gain, or loss to shun,
 As, when acquainted with these deadly snares,
 I flew from the blest confines of the sun,
 Trusting that eloquence, which to thy name
 And to thy followers such praise has won.
 She having thus explain'd her gracious aim,
 Turn'd her bright eyes, which tears of pity fill :
 And hence more swift to thy relief I came ;
 And, pleas'd to execute her heavenly will,
 I sav'd thee from the fury of that Beast,
 Which barr'd thy journey up the brighter hill.
 Why then, O why has all thy ardour ceas'd ?
 And whence this faintness in thy feeble mind ?
 Why has its noble energy decreas'd,
 When these pure Spirits, for thy good combin'd,
 Watch o'er thy safety in their heavenly seat,
 And I reveal the favour thou shalt find ?—
 As tender flowers, reviv'd by solar heat,
 That thro' the chilling night have sunk deprest,
 Rise and unfold, the welcome ray to meet ;
 So rose my spirit, of new life possest ;
 And, my warm heart on high achievements bent,
 I thus my animating guide address'd :
 Gracious that Spirit who thy succour sent !
 And friendly thou, who freely hast display'd
 Thy zeal to execute her kind intent !
 Thy soothing words have to my soul convey'd
 Such keen desire to those bright realms to soar,
 I scorn the terror that my step delay'd.

Now

Or va, ch'un sol volere è d'amendue:
 Tu duca, tu signore, e tu maestro:
 Così li dissi: e poichè mosso fue,
 Entrai per lo cammino alto e silvestro.

C A N T O III.

“**P**ER me si va nella città dolente:
 Per me si va nell' eterno dolore:
 Per me si va tra la perduta gente.
 Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto fattore:
 Fecemi la divina potestate,
 La somma sapienza, e 'l primo amore.
 Dinanzi a me non fur cose create,
 Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro:
 Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che 'ntrate.”
 Queste parole di colore oscuro
 Vid' io scritte al sommo d'una porta:
 Perch'io, Maestro, il senso lor m'è duro.
 Ed egli a me, come persona accorta,
 Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto:
 Ogni viltà convien, che qui sia morta.
 Noi sem venuti al luogo, ov' i' t'ho detto,
 Che tu vedrai le genti dolorose,
 Ch'hanno perduto 'l ben dello 'ntelletto.
 E poichè la sua mano alla mia pose,
 Con lieto volto, ond' i' mi confortai,
 Mi mise dentro alle segrete cose.
 Quivi sospiri, pianti, e alti guai
 Risonavan, per l'aer senza stelle:
 Perch'io al cominciar, ne lagrimai.
 Diverse lingue, orribili favelle,
 Parole di dolore, accenti d'ira,
 Voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle

Now lead!—thy pleasure I dispute no more.

My lord, my master thou! and thou my guard!—

I ended here; and, while he march'd before,
The gloomy road I enter'd, deep and hard.

CANTO III.

“**T**HRO' me you pass to Mourning's dark domain;

Thro' me to scenes where Grief must ever pine;

Thro' me, to Misery's devoted train:

Justice and power in my Great Founder join,

And love and wisdom all his fabrics rear;

Wisdom above controul, and love divine!

Before me, Nature saw no works appear,

Save works eternal: such was I ordain'd.

Quit every hope, all ye who enter here!”

These characters, where misty darkness reign'd,

High o'er a lofty gate I saw engrav'd.

Ah Sire! (said I) hard things are here contain'd.

He, sapient Guide! my farther question sav'd,

With spirit answering, “Here all doubt resign,

All weak distrust, and every thought deprav'd;

At length we've reach'd that gloomy drear confine,

Where, as I said, thou'lt see the mournful race.

For ever robb'd of Reason's light benign.”

Then, stretching forth his hand with gentle grace,

From whence new comfort through my bosom flows,

He led me in to that mysterious place.

There sighs, and wailings, and severest woes,

Deeply resounded through the starless air;

And as I first advanc'd, my fears arose.

Each different cry, the murmuring notes of care,

Accents of misery, and words of ire,

With all the sounds of discord and despair,

Facevano un tumulto, il qual s'aggira
 Sempre 'n quell' aria, senza tempo, tinta,
 Come la rena quando 'l turbo spira.
 Ed io, ch' avea d'error la testa cinta,
 Disfi, Maestro, che è quel, ch' i' odo?
 E che gent' è, che par nel duol sì vinta?
 Ed egli a me: Questo misero modo
 Tengon l' anime triste di coloro,
 Che visser senza infamia, e senza lodo.
 Mischiate sono a quel cattivo coro
 Degli angeli, che non furon ribelli,
 Nè fur fedeli a Dio, ma per se foro.
 Cacciarli i ciel, per non esser men belli:
 Nè lo profondo inferno gli riceve,
 Ch' alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d'elli.
 Ed io: Maestro, che è tanto greve
 A lor, che lamentar gli fa sì forte?
 Rispose: Dicerolti molto breve.
 Questi non hanno speranza di morte:
 E la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa,
 Che 'nvidiosi son d'ogni altra forte.
 Fama di loro il mondo esser non lascia:
 Misericordia e giustizia gli sdegna.
 Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda, e passa.
 Ed io, che riguardai, vidi una insegna,
 Che, girando, correva tanto ratta,
 Che d'ogni posa mi pareva indegna.
 E dietro le venia sì lunga tratta
 Di gente, ch' i' non avrei mai creduto,
 Che morte tanta n' avesse disfatta.
 Poscia ch' io v'ebbi alcun riconosciuto,
 Guardai, e vidi l'ombra di colui,
 Che fece, per viltate, il gran rifiuto.
 Incontanente intese, e certo fui,
 Che quest' era la fetta de' cattivi
 A Dio spiacenti, ed a' nemici sui.

To form such tumult in this scene conspire,
 As flies for ever round the gloomy waste,
 Like sand when quicken'd by the whirlwind's fire.
 I then (my mind with error still disgrac'd)
 Exclaim'd—O Sire! what may this trouble mean?
 What forms are these, by sorrow so debas'd?—
 He soon reply'd—Behold, these bounds between,
 All who without or infamy or fame
 Clos'd the blank business of their mortal scene!
 They join those angels, of ignoble name,
 Who not rebell'd, yet were not faithful found;
 Without attachment! self alone their aim!
 Heaven shuts them out from its un sullied bound;
 And Hell refuses to admit this train,
 Left e'en the damn'd o'er these their triumph found.—
 O Sire! (said I) whence then this grievous pain,
 That on our ears their lamentations grate?—
 This (he reply'd) I will in brief explain:
 These have no hope that death may mend their fate;
 And their blind days form so confus'd a mass,
 They pine with envy of each other's state:
 From earth their name has perish'd, like the grass;
 E'en Mercy views them with a scornful eye.
 We'll speak of them no more: Behold! and pass!—
 I look'd, and saw a banner rais'd on high,
 That whirl'd, unconscious of a moment's stand,
 With rapid circles in the troubled sky:
 Behind it, driven by Fate's supreme command,
 Came such a host! I ne'er could have believ'd
 Death had collected so complete a band.
 When now I had the forms of all perceiv'd,
 I saw the shade of that ignoble priest,
 Of sovereign power by indolence bereav'd.
 Instant I knew, from every doubt releas'd,
 These were the base, the miscreated crew
 To whom the hate of God had never ceas'd.

Questi sciaurati, che mai non fur vivi,
 Erano ignudi, e stimolati molto
 Da mosconi, e da vespe, ch'erano ivi.
 Elle rigavan lor di sangue il volto,
 Che mischiato di lagrime, a' lor piedi,
 Da fastidiosi vermi era ricolto.
 E poi, ch'a riguardare oltre mi diedi,
 Vidi gente alla riva d'un gran fiume ;
 Perch' i' dissi : Maestro, or mi concedi,
 Ch'io sappia, quali sono, e qual costume
 Le fa parer di trapassar sì pronte,
 Com'io discerno per lo fioco lume.
 Ed egli a me : Le cose ti sien conte,
 Quando noi fermerem li nostri passi
 Su la trista riviera d'Acheronte.
 Allor con gli occhi vergognosi e bassi
 Temendo, no 'l mio dir gli fusse grave,
 Infino al fiume di parlar mi traffi.
 Ed ecco verso noi venir, per nave,
 Un vecchio bianco, per antico pelo,
 Gridando, Guai à voi anime prave :
 Non isperate mai veder lo cielo :
 I' vegno, per menarvi all' altra riva
 Nelle tenebre eterne, in caldo e'n gielo :
 E tu, che se' così, anima viva,
 Partiti da cotesti, che son morti :
 Ma poi ch' e' vide, ch' i' non mi partiva,
 Dissè : Per altre vie, per altri porti
 Verrai a piaggia, non qui, per passare :
 Più lieve legno convien, che ti porti.
 E'l duca a lui : Caron, non ti crucciare :
 Vuolsi così colà, dove si puote
 Ciò che si vuole, e più non dimandare.
 Quinci fur quete le lanose gote
 Al nocchier della livida palude,
 Che 'ntorno agli occhi ave' di fiamme ruote.

Vile forms ! ne'er honor'd with existence true !
 Naked they march'd, and sorely were they stung
 By wasps and hornets, that around them flew ;
 These the black blood from their gall'd faces wrung ;
 Blood mixt with tears, that, trickling to their feet,
 Fed the fastidious worms which round them clung.
 When now I farther pierc'd the dark retreat,
 Numbers I saw beside a mighty stream :
 Sudden I cry'd—Now, Sire, let me entreat
 To know what forms in distant prospect seem
 To pass so swiftly o'er a flood so wide,
 As I discern by this imperfect gleam ?—
 That shalt thou know (return'd my gracious Guide)
 When the near respite from our toil we reach.
 On fullen Acheron's infernal tide.—
 With downcast eyes, that pardon now beseech,
 And hoping silence may that pardon win,
 E'en to the river I abstain'd from speech.
 And lo ! towards us, with a shrivell'd skin,
 A hoary boatman steers his crazy bark,
 Exclaiming, “ Woe to all ye sons of sin !
 Hope not for heaven, nor light's celestial spark !
 I come to waft you to a different lot ;
 To Torture's realm, with endless horror dark :
 And thou, who living view'st this sacred spot,
 Hastle to depart from these, for these are dead ! ”
 But when he saw that I departed not,
 In wrath he cry'd, “ Thro' other passes led,
 Not here, shalt thou attempt the farther shore ;
 But in a bark to bear thy firmer tread.”—
 O Charon, said my Guide, thy strife give o'er ;
 For thus 'tis will'd in that superior scene
 Where will is power. Seek thou to know no more !—
 Now grew the bearded visage more serene
 Of the stern boatman on the livid lake,
 Whose eyes so lately glar'd with anger keen :

Ma quell' anime, ch'eran lasse e nude,
Cangiar colore, e dibattero i denti,
Ratto che 'nteser le parole crude.
Besteminiavano Iddio, e i lor parenti,
L'umana spezie, il luogo, il tempo, e'l feme,
Di lor semenza, e di lor nascimenti.
Poi si ritraffer tutte quante insieme
Forte piangendo, alla riva malvagia,
Ch'attende ciascun'uom, che Dio non teme.
Caron dimonio, con occhi di bragia,
Loro accennando, tutte le raccoglie:
Batte col remo, qualunque s'adagia.
Come d' Autunno si levàn le foglie,
L'una appresso dell' altra, infin che 'l ramo
Rende alla terra tutte le sue spoglie;
Similmente il mal feme d' Adamo:
Gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una,
Per cenni, com' augel, per suo richiamo.
Così sen vanno su per l'onda bruna,
E avanti che sien di là discese,
Anche di qua nova schiera s'aduna.
Figliuol mio, disse il maestro cortese,
Quelli, che muojon nell' ira di Dio,
'Tutti convegnon qui d' ogni paese:
E pronti sono al trapassar del rio,
Che la divina giustizia gli sprona,
Sì che la tema si volge in disio.
Quinci non passa mai anima buona:
E però se Caron di te si lagna,
Ben puoi saper omai, che'l suo dir suona.
Finito questo la buja campagna
Tremò sì forte, che dello spavento
La mente di sudore ancor mi bagna.
La terra lagrimosa diede vento,
Che balenò una luce vermiglia,
La qual mi vinse ciascun sentimento:
E caddi, come l' uom, cui sonno piglia.

But all the naked shades began to quake ;
Their shuddering figures grew more pale than earth,
Soon as they heard the cruel words he spake:
God they blasphem'd, their parents' injur'd worth,
And all mankind ; the place, the hour, that saw
Their first formation, and their future birth.
Then were they driven, by Fate's resistless law,
Weeping, to that sad scene prepar'd for all
Who fear not God with pure devotion's awe.
Charon, with eyes of fire and words of gall,
Collects his crew, and high his oar he wields,
To strike the tardy wretch who flights his call.
As leaves in autumn thro' the woody fields
Fly in succession, when each trembling tree
Its ling'ring honors to the whirlwind yields ;
So this bad race, condemn'd by Heaven's decree,
Successive hasten from that river's side :
As birds, which at a call to bondage flee,
So are they wafted o'er the gloomy tide ;
And ere from thence their journey is begun,
A second crew awaits their hoary guide.—
My gracious Master kindly said—My son !
All those who in the wrath of God expire,
From every clime haste hither, one by one ;
Nor would their terrors from this stream retire,
Since heavenly justice so impels their mind,
That fear is quicken'd into keen desire.
Here may no spirit pass, to good inclin'd ;
And hence, if Charon seem'd to thwart thy will,
Hence wilt thou deem his purpose not unkind.—
He paus'd ; and horrors of approaching ill
Now made the mournful troop so stand aghast,
Their fears yet strike me with a deadly chill !
The groaning earth sent forth a hollow blast,
And flash'd a fiery glare of gloomy red !
The horrid scene my fainting power surpass :
I fell, and, as in sleep, my senses fled.

NOTE V. VERSE 127.

The gay Boccacio, tempts th' Italian Muse.] Boccacio was almost utterly unknown to our country as a Poet, when two of our most accomplished Critics restored his poetical reputation.

Mr. Tyrwhitt, to whom Chaucer is as deeply indebted as a Poet can be to the judgment and erudition of his commentator, has given a sketch of Boccacio's *Theſeida*, in his introductory discourse to the *Canterbury Tales*; and Mr. Warton has enriched the first volume of his *History of English Poetry* with a considerable specimen of this very rare Italian Epic poem, of which our country is said to possess but a single copy.—The father of Boccacio was an Italian merchant, a native of Certaldo, near Florence, who in his travels attached himself to a young woman of Paris; and our Poet is supposed to have been the illegitimate offspring of that connection. He was born in 1313, and educated as a student of the canon law; but a sight of Virgil's tomb, according to Filippo Villani, his most ancient Biographer, made him resolve to relinquish his more irksome pursuits, and devote himself entirely to the Muses. His life seems to have been divided between literature and love, as he was equally remarkable for an amorous disposition, and a passionate attachment to study. His most celebrated mistress was Mary of Arragon, the natural daughter of Robert, King of Naples, the generous and enthusiastic patron of Petrarch. To this lady, distinguished by the name of *The Fiammetta*, Boccacio addressed his capital poem, the *Theſeida*; telling her, in an introductory letter, that it contained many allusions to the particular circumstances of their own secret attachment. In his latter days he retired to Certaldo, and died there in the year 1475, of a disorder supposed to have arisen from excessive application. Few authors have rendered more essential service to the republic of letters than Boccacio, as he not only contributed very much to the improvement of his native language, but was particularly instrumental in promoting the revival of ancient learning: a merit which he shared with Petrarch. The tender and generous friendship which subsisted between these two engaging authors, reflects the highest honour on both; and their letters to each other may be ranked among the most interesting productions of that period. Boccacio composed, according

to Quadrio, no less than thirty-four volumes. His Novels are universally known: his Poetical Works are as follow: 1. *La Theseida* in Ottava Rima. 2. *L'Amorosa Visione* in Terza Rima. 3. *Il Filostrato* in Ottava Rima. 4. *Il Ninfale Fiesolano* in Ottava Rima.—He piqued himself on being the first Poet who sung of martial subjects in Italian verse; and he has been generally supposed the inventor of the Ottava Rima, the common Heroic measure of the Italian Muse; but Quadrio has shewn that it was used by preceding writers; and Pasquier, in his *Recherches*, has quoted two stanzas of Thibaud king of Navarre, written in the same measure, on Blanch queen of France, who died in 1252. The neglect into which the Poems of Boccaccio had fallen appears the more striking, as he peculiarly prided himself on his poetical character; informing the world, by an inscription on his tomb, that Poetry was his favourite pursuit—*Studium fuit alma Poesis*, are the last words of the epitaph which he composed for himself.

NOTE VI. VERSE 142.

She spoke exulting, and Trissino sung.] Giovanni Giorgio Trissino was born of a noble family in Vicenza, 1478: he was particularly distinguished by a passion for Poetry and Architecture; and one of the very few Poets who have been rich enough to build a palace. This he is said to have done from a design of his own, under the direction of the celebrated Palladio. He had the merit of writing the first regular tragedy in the Italian language, entitled *Sophonisba*; but in his Epic poem he is generally allowed to have failed, though some learned Critics (and Gravina amongst them) have endeavoured to support the credit of that performance. His subject was the expulsion of the Goths from Italy by Belisarius; and his poem consists of twenty-seven books, in blank verse. He addressed it to the Emperor Charles the Vth; and professes in his Dedication to have taken Aristotle for his preceptor, and Homer for his guide.

The reader will excuse a trifling anachronism, in my naming Trissino before Ariosto, for poetical reasons. The *Italia Liberata* of the former was first published in 1548; the *Orlando Furioso*, in 1515. Trissino died at Rome, 1550; Ariosto at Ferrara, 1533.

NOTE VII. VERSE 194.

Of a poetic Sire the more poetic Son.] The reputation of Torquato Tasso has almost eclipsed that of his father Bernardo, who was himself a considerable Poet, and left two productions of the Epic kind, *L'Amadigi*, and *Il Floridante*: the latter remained unfinished at his death, but was afterwards published in its imperfect state by his son; who has spoken of his father's poetry with filial regard, in his different critical works. The *Amadigi* was written at the request of several Spanish Grandees, in the court of Charles the Vth, and first printed in Venice by Giolito, 1560. The curious reader may find an entertaining account of the Author's ideas in composing this work, among his Letters, volume the first, page 198. I cannot help remarking, that the letter referred to contains a simile which Torquato has introduced in the opening of his *Jerusalem Delivered*.

The Italians have formed a very pleasing and valuable work, by collecting the letters of their eminent Painters; which contain much information on points relating to their art. The letters of their Poets, if properly selected, might also form a few interesting volumes: as a proof of this, I shall insert a short letter of the younger Tasso, because it seems to have escaped the notice of his Biographers, and relates the remarkable circumstance of his having deliberated on five different subjects before he decided in favour of *Goffredo*:

Al M. Illustre Sig. Conte Ferrante Etense Tassone.

Io ho scritto questa mattina a V. S. che io desidero di far due Poemi a mio gusto; e sebben per elezione non cambierei il soggetto che una volta presi; nondimeno per soddisfare il signor principe gli do l' elezione di tutti questi soggetti, i quali mi pajono sovra gli altri atti a ricever la forma eroica.

Espeidizion di Goffredo, e degli altri principi contra gl' Infedeli, e ritorno. Dove avrò occasione di lodar le famiglie d' Europa, che io vorrò.

Espeidizion di Belisario contra i Goti.

Di Narsete contra i Goti, e discorro d' un principe. E in questi

vrei grandissima occasione di lodar le cose di Spagna e d' Italia e di Grecia e l' origine di casa d' Austria.

Espezzion di Carlo il magno contra Lanfoni.

Espezzion di Carlo contra i Longobardi. In questi troverei l' origine di tutte le famiglie grandi di Germania, di Francia, e d' Italia, e l' ritorno d' un principe.

E sebben alcuni di questi soggetti sono stati presi, non importa; perche io cercherei di trattargli meglio, e a giudicio d' Aristotele.

Opere di Torquato Tasso, tom. ix. p. 240.

This letter is the more worthy of notice, as the subject on which Tasso fixed has been called by Voltaire, and perhaps very justly, *Le plus grand qu'on ait jamais choisi*. Le Tasse l'a traité dignement, adds the lively Critic, with unusual candour; yet in his subsequent remarks he is peculiarly severe on the magic of the Italian Poet. The merits of Tasso are very ably defended against the injustice of French criticism, and particularly that of Boileau and Voltaire, in the well-known Letters on Chivalry and Romance. Indeed the genius of this injured Poet seems at length to triumph in the country where he was most insulted, as the French have lately attempted a poetical version of his *Jerusalem*.

I enter not into the history of Tasso, or that of his rival Ariosto, because the public has lately received from Mr. Hoole a judicious account of their lives, prefixed to his elegant versions of their respective Poems.

N O T E V I I I . V E R S E 197.

Shall gay Tassoni want his festive crown.] Alessandro Tassoni, the supposed inventor of the modern Heroi-comic Poetry, was born at Modena, 1565. His family was noble; but his parents dying during his infancy, left him exposed to vexatious law-suits, which absorbed a great part of his patrimony, and rendered him dependant. In 1599 he was engaged as Secretary to Cardinal Ascanio Colonna, whom he attended on an embassy into Spain. He was occasionally dispatched into Italy on the service of that Prelate, and in the course of one of these expeditions wrote his *Observations on Petrarch*. In 1605 he is supposed

to have quitted the service of the Cardinal, and to have lived in a state of freedom at Rome, where, in 1607, he became the chief of a literary society, entitled *Academia degli Umoristi*. He was afterwards employed in the service of Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy; which, after suffering many vexations in it, he quitted with a design of devoting himself to study and retirement. But this design he was induced to relinquish, and to serve the Cardinal Lodovisio, nephew of Pope Gregory XV. from whom he received a considerable stipend. On the death of this patron, in 1632, he was recalled to his native city by Francis the First, Duke of Modena, and obtained an honourable establishment in the court of that Prince. Age had now rendered him unable to enjoy his good fortune: his health declined in the year of his return, and he expired in April 1635. His genius was particularly disposed to lively satire; and the incidents of his life had a tendency to increase that disposition. After having passed many vexatious and unprofitable years in the service of the Great, he had his portrait painted, with a fig in his hand; and Muratori supposes him to have written these two lines on the occasion:

Dextera cur ficum, quæris, mea gestet inanem:
Longi operis merces hæc fuit; aula dedit.

His celebrated Poem, *La Secchia rapita*, was written, as he has himself declared, in 1611; begun in April, and finished in October. It was circulated in MS. received with the utmost avidity, and first printed at Paris 1622. In a catalogue of the numerous editions of the *Secchia*, which Muratori has prefixed to his *Life of Tassoni*, he includes an English translation of it, printed 1715.

NOTE IX. VERSE 209.

And rashly judges that her Vega's lyre.] The famous Lope de Vega, frequently called the Shakespear of Spain, is perhaps the most fertile Poet in the annals of Parnassus; and it would be difficult to name any author, ancient or modern, so universally idolized while living by all ranks of people, and so magnificently rewarded by the liberality of the Great. He was the son of Felix de Vega and Francisca Fernandez,

who were both descended from honourable families, and lived in the neighbourhood of Madrid. Our Poet was born in that city, on the 25th of November 1562. He was, according to his own expression, a Poet from his cradle; and, beginning to make verses before he had learned to write, he used to bribe his elder school-fellows with a part of his breakfast, to commit to paper the lines he had composed. Having lost his father while he was still a child, he engaged in a frolic, very natural to a lively boy, and wandered with another lad to various parts of Spain, till, having spent their money, and being conducted before a magistrate at Segovia, for offering to sell a few trinkets, they were sent home again to Madrid. Soon after this adventure, our young Poet was taken under the protection of Geronimo Manrique, Bishop of Avila, and began to distinguish himself by his dramatic compositions, which were received with great applause by the public, though their author had not yet completed his education; for, after this period, he became a member of the university of Alcalá, where he devoted himself for four years to the study of philosophy. He was then engaged as Secretary to the Duke of Alva, and wrote his *Arcadia* in compliment to that patron; who is frequently mentioned in his Occasional Poems. He quitted that employment on his marriage with Isabel de Urbina, a lady (says his friend and biographer Perez de Montalvan) beautiful without artifice, and virtuous without affectation. His domestic happiness was soon interrupted by a painful incident:—Having written some lively verses in ridicule of a person who had taken some injurious freedom with his character, he received a challenge in consequence of his wit; and happening, in the duel which ensued, to give his adversary a dangerous wound, he was obliged to fly from his family, and shelter himself in Valencia. He resided there a considerable time; but connubial affection recalled him to Madrid. His wife died in the year of his return. His affliction on this event led him to relinquish his favourite studies, and embark on board the Armada which was then preparing for the invasion of England. He had a brother who served in that fleet as a lieutenant; and being shot in an engagement with some Dutch vessels, his virtues were celebrated by our afflicted Poet, whose heart was peculiarly alive to every generous affection. After the ill success of the Armada, the disconsolate Lope de Vega returned to Madrid, and became Secretary to the Marquis

of Malpica, to whom he has addressed a grateful Sonnet. From the service of this Patron he passed into the household of the Count of Lemos, whom he celebrates as an inimitable Poet. He was once more induced to quit his attendance on the Great, for the more inviting comforts of a married life. His second choice was Juana de Guardio, of noble birth and singular beauty. By this lady he had two children; a son, who died in his infancy, and a daughter, named Feliciana, who survived her father. The death of his little boy is said to have hastened that of his wife, whom he had the misfortune to lose in about seven years after his marriage. Having now experienced the precariousness of all human enjoyments, he devoted himself to a religious life, and fulfilled all the duties of it with the most exemplary piety; still continuing to produce an astonishing variety of poetical compositions. His talents and his virtues procured him many unsolicited honours. Pope Urban the VIIIth sent him the Cross of Malta, with the title of Doctor in Divinity, and appointed him to a place of profit in the Apostolic Chamber; favours for which he expressed his gratitude by dedicating his *Corona Tragica* (a long poem on the fate of Mary Queen of Scots) to that liberal Pontiff. In his seventy-third year he felt the approaches of death, and prepared himself for it with the utmost composure and devotion. His last hours were attended by many of his intimate friends, and particularly his chief patron the Duke of Sessa, whom he made his executor; leaving him the care of his daughter Feliciana, and of his various manuscripts. The manner in which he took leave of those he loved was most tender and affecting. He said to his Disciple and Biographer, Montalvan, That true fame consisted in being good; and that he would willingly exchange all the applauses he had received, to add a single deed of virtue to the actions of his life. Having given his dying benediction to his daughter, and performed the last ceremonies of his religion, he expired on the 25th of August 1635.

The splendor of his funeral was equal to the respect paid to him while living.—His magnificent patron, the Duke of Sessa, invited the chief nobility of the kingdom to attend it. The ceremony was prolonged through the course of several days; and three sermons in honour of the deceased were delivered by three of the most celebrated preachers. These

are printed with the works of the Poet, and may be considered as curious specimens of the false eloquence which prevailed at that time. A volume of encomiastic verses, chiefly Spanish, and written by more than a hundred and fifty of the most distinguished characters in Spain, was published soon after the death of this lamented Bard. To this collection his friend and disciple Perez de Montalvan prefixed a circumstantial account of his life and death, which I have chiefly followed in the preceding narrative. An ingenious Traveller, who has lately published a pleasing volume of Letters on the Poetry of Spain, has imputed the duel in which Lope de Vega was engaged to the gallantries of his first wife; but Montalvan's relation of that adventure clears the honor of the lady, whose innocence is still farther supported by a poem written in her praise by Pedro de Medina Medinilla: it is printed in the works of our Poet, who is introduced in it, under the name of Belardo, celebrating the excellencies and lamenting the loss of his departed Isabel.

Of the person and manners of Lope de Vega, his friend Montalvan has only given this general account:—that his frame of body was particularly strong, and preserved by temperance in continued health;—that in conversation he was mild and unassuming; courteous to all, and to women peculiarly gallant;—very eager when engaged in the business of his friends, and somewhat careless in the management of his own. Of his wealth and charity I shall have occasion to speak in a subsequent note. The chief expences in which he indulged himself were books and pictures; of the latter, he distributed a few as legacies to his intimate friends: to the Duke of Sessa, a fine portrait of himself; and to me, says Montalvan, another, painted when he was young, surrounded by dogs, monkeys, and other monsters, and writing in the midst of them, without attending to their noise.—Of the honours paid to this extraordinary Poet, his Biographer asserts that no person of eminence visited Spain without seeking his personal acquaintance; that men yielded him precedence when they met him in the streets, and women saluted him with benedictions when he passed under their windows. If such homage can be deserved by the most unwearied application to poetry, Lope de Vega was certainly entitled to it. He declared that he constantly wrote five sheets a day; and his biographers, who have formed a calculation from this account, conclude the number of his verses to be

no less than 21,316,000. His country has very lately published an elegant edition of his poems in 19 quarto volumes; his dramatic works are to be added to this collection, and will probably be still more voluminous. I shall speak only of the former.—Among his poems there are several of the Epic kind; the three following appear to me the most remarkable. 1. *La Dragontea*. 2. *La Hermosura de Angelica*. 3. *La Jerusalem Conquistada*. The *Dragontea* consists of ten cantos, on the last expedition and death of our great naval hero Sir Francis Drake, whom the Poet, from his excessive partiality to his country, considers as an avaricious pirate, or rather, as he chuses to call him, a marine Dragon: and it may be sufficient to observe that he has treated him accordingly. The poem on *Angelica* seems to have been written in emulation of Ariosto, and it is founded on a hint in that Poet: it was composed in the early part of our Author's life, and contains many compliments to his sovereign Philip the II^d: it consists of 20 cantos, and closes with *Angelica's* being restored to her beloved *Medoro*. In his *Jerusalem Conquistada* he enters the lists with *Tasso*, whom he mentions in his preface as having sung the first part of the history which he had chosen for his subject. From the great name of *Lope de Vega*, I had some thoughts of presenting to the reader a sketch of this his most remarkable poem; but as an Epic Poet he appears to me so much inferior to *Tasso*, and to his countryman and cotemporary *Ercilla*, that I am unwilling to swell these extensive notes by an enlarged description of so unsuccessful a work: the Author has prophesied in the close of it, that, although neglected by his own age, it would be esteemed by futurity:—a singular proof that even the most favoured writers are frequently disposed to declaim against the period in which they live. If *Lope de Vega* could think himself neglected, what Poet may ever expect to be satisfied with popular applause?—But to return to his *Jerusalem Conquistada*. Richard the Second of England, and *Alphonso* the Eighth of Castile, are the chief heroes of the poem; which contains twenty cantos; and closes with the unfortunate return of these confederate Kings, and the death of *Saladin*. It was first printed 1609, more than twenty years after the first appearance of *Tasso's Jerusalem*.—One of the most amiable peculiarities in the character of *Lope de Vega*, is the extreme liberality with which he commends the merit of his rivals. In his *Laurel de Apollo*, he celebrates

brates all the eminent Spanish and Portuguese Poets; he speaks both of Camoens and Ercilla with the warmest applause. Among the most pleasing passages in this poem is a compliment which he pays to his father, who was, like the father of Tasso, a Poet of considerable talents.

Among the smaller pieces of Lope de Vega, there are two particularly curious; a descriptive poem on the garden of his patron the Duke of Alva, and a sonnet in honour of the Invincible Armada: the latter may be considered as a complete model of Spanish bombast: "Go forth and burn the world," says the Poet, addressing himself to that mighty fleet; "my sighs will furnish your sails with a never-failing wind; and my breast will supply your cannon with inexhaustible fire."—Perhaps this may be equalled by a Spanish character of our Poet, with which I shall close my imperfect account of him. It is his friend and biographer Montalvan, who, in the opening of his life, bestows on him the following titles: El Doctor Frey Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, Portento del Orbe, Gloria de la Nacion, Lustre de la Patria, Oracula de la Lengua, Centro de la Fama, Assumpcio de la Invidia, Cuydado de la Fortuna, Fenix de los Siglos, Principe de los Versos, Orfeo de las Ciencias, Apolo de las Musas, Horacio de los Poetas, Virgilio de los Epicos, Homero de los Heroycos, Pindaro de los Lyricos, Sofocles de los Tragicos, y Terencio de los Comicos, Unico entre los Mayores, Mayor entre los Grandes, y Grande a todas Luzes, y en todas Materias.

NOTE X. VERSE 239.

The brave Ercilla sounds, with potent breath,

His Epic trumpet in the fields of death.] Don Alonzo de Ercilla y Zuniga was equally distinguished as a Hero and a Poet; but this exalted character, notwithstanding his double claim to our regard, is almost totally unknown in our country, and I shall therefore endeavour to give the English reader the best idea that I can, both of his gallant life, and of his singular poem.—He was born in Madrid, on the 7th of August 1533, the third son of Fortun Garcia de Ercilla, who, though descended from a noble family, pursued the profession of the law, and was so remarkable for his talents, that he acquired the appellation of "The subtle Spaniard." The mother of our Poet was also noble, and from her he inherited his
second

second title, *Zuniga* : *Ercilla* was the name of an ancient castle in Biscay, which had been long in the possession of his paternal ancestors. He lost his father while he was yet an infant, a circumstance which had great influence on his future life ; for his mother was received, after the decease of her husband, into the household of the Empress Isabella, the wife of Charles the Vth, and had thus an early opportunity of introducing our young Alonzo into the palace. He soon obtained an appointment there, in the character of page to the Infant Don Philip, to whose service he devoted himself with the most heroic enthusiasm, though Philip was a master who little deserved so generous an attachment. At the age of fourteen, he attended that Prince in the splendid progress which he made, at the desire of his Imperial father, through the principal cities of the Netherlands, and through parts of Italy and Germany. This singular expedition is very circumstantially recorded in a folio volume, by a Spanish historian named Juan Christoval Calvete de Estrella, whose work affords a very curious and striking picture of the manners and ceremonies of that martial and romantic age. All the cities which were visited by the Prince contended with each other in magnificent festivity : the brilliant series of literary and warlike pageants which they exhibited, though they answered not their design of conciliating the affection of the sullen Philip, might probably awaken the genius of our youthful Poet, and excite his ambition to acquire both poetical and military fame. In 1551, he returned with the Prince into Spain, and continued there for three years ; at the end of which he attended his royal master to England on his marriage with Queen Mary, which was celebrated at Winchester in the summer of 1554. At this period *Ercilla* first assumed the military character ; for his sovereign received advice, during his residence at London, that the martial natives of *Arauco*, a district on the coast of Chile, had revolted from the Spanish government, and dispatched an experienced officer, named *Alderete*, who attended him in England, to subdue the insurrection, investing him with the command of the rebellious province. *Ercilla* embarked with *Alderete* ; but that officer dying in his passage, our Poet proceeded to Lima. Don *Hurtado de Mendoza*, who commanded there as Viceroy of Peru, appointed his son Don *Garcia* to supply the place of *Alderete*, and sent him with a considerable force to oppose the *Araucanians*. *Ercilla* was engaged in this enterprize, and greatly

greatly distinguished himself in the obstinate contest which ensued. The noble character of the Barbarians who maintained this unequal struggle, and the many splendid feats of valour which this scene afforded, led our author to the singular design of making the war, in which he was himself engaged, the subject of an Heroic poem; which he entitled "*La Araucana*," from the name of the country. As many of his own particular adventures may be found in the following summary of his work, I shall not here enlarge on his military exploits; but proceed to one of the most mortifying events of his life, which he briefly mentions in the conclusion of his poem. After passing with great honour through many and various perils, he was on the point of suffering a disgraceful death, from the rash orders of his young and inconsiderate Commander. On his return from an expedition of adventure and discovery, to the Spanish city of Imperial, he was present at a scene of public festivity displayed there, to celebrate the accession of Philip the II^d to the crown of Spain; at a kind of tournament, there arose an idle dispute between Ercilla and Don Juan de Pineda, in the heat of which the two disputants drew their swords; many of the spectators joined in the broil; and, a report arising that the quarrel was a mere pretence, to conceal some mutinous design, the hasty Don Garcia, their General, committed the two antagonists to prison, and sentenced them both to be publicly beheaded. Ercilla himself declares, he was conducted to the scaffold before his precipitate judge discovered the iniquity of the sentence; but his innocence appeared just time enough to save him; and he seems to have been fully reinstated in the good opinion of Don Garcia, as, among the complimentary sonnets addressed to Ercilla, there is one which bears the name of his General, in which he styles him the Divine Alonzo, and celebrates both his military and poetical genius. But Ercilla seems to have been deeply wounded by this affront; for, quitting Chile, he went to Callao, the port of Lima, and there embarked on an expedition against a Spanish rebel, named Lope de Aguirre, who, having murdered his captain, and usurped the chief power, was perpetrating the most cruel enormities in the settlement of Venezuela. But Ercilla learned, on his arrival at Panama, that this barbarous usurper was destroyed; he therefore resolved, as his health was much impaired by the hardships he had passed, to return to Spain. He arrived there in the twenty-

ninth year of his age; but soon left it, and travelled, as he himself informs us, through France, Italy, Germany, Silesia, Moravia, and Pannonia; but the particulars of this expedition are unknown. In the year 1570 he appeared again at Madrid, and was married to Maria Bazan, a lady whom he contrives to celebrate in the course of his military poem. He is said to have been afterwards gentleman of the bed-chamber to the Emperor Rodolph the II^d, a prince who had been educated at Madrid; but the connection of our Poet with this Monarch is very indistinctly recorded; and indeed all the latter part of his life is little known. In the year 1580 he resided at Madrid, in a state of retirement and poverty. The time and circumstances of his death are uncertain: it is proved that he was living in the year 1596, by the evidence of a Spanish writer named Mosquera, who, in a treatise of military discipline, speaks of Ercilla as engaged at that time in celebrating the victories of Don Alvaro Bazan, Marques de Santa Cruz, in a poem which has never appeared, and is supposed to have been left imperfect at his death. Some anecdotes related of our Poet afford us ground to hope that his various merits were not entirely unrewarded. It is said, that in speaking to his sovereign Philip, he was so overwhelmed by diffidence that language failed him: "Don Alonzo! (replied the King) speak to me in writing."—He did so, and obtained his request. The Spanish Historian Ovalle, who has written an account of Chile, in which he frequently supports his narration by the authority of Ercilla, affirms that our Poet presented his work to Philip with his own hand, and received a recompence from the King. But in this circumstance I fear the Historian was mistaken, as he supposes it to have happened on the return of Ercilla from Chile; and our Poet, in a distinct portion of his work, which was not published till many years after that period, expressly declares, in addressing himself to Philip, that all his attempts to serve him had been utterly unrequited. Ercilla left no legitimate family; but had some natural children, the most eminent of which was a daughter, who was advantageously married to a nobleman of Portugal.

In that elegant collection of Spanish Poets, "*Parnaso Español*," there is a pleasing little amorous poem, written by Ercilla in his youth, which is peculiarly commended by Lope de Vega; who has bestowed a very generous encomium on our Poet, in his "*Lauriel de Apolo*." But the great
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and singular work which has justly rendered Ercilla immortal, is his Poem entitled *Araucana*, which was published in three separate parts: the first appeared in 1577; he added the second in the succeeding year; and in 1590 he printed a complete edition of the whole. It was applauded by the most eminent writers of Spain; and Cervantes, in speaking of *Don Quixote's* Library, has ranked it among the choicest treasures of the Castilian Muse. Voltaire, who speaks of Ercilla with his usual spirit and inaccuracy, has the merit of having made our Poet more generally known, though his own acquaintance with him appears to have been extremely slight; for he affirms that Ercilla was in the battle of Saint Quintin: a mistake into which he never could have fallen, had he read the *Araucana*. Indeed the undistinguishing censure which he passes on the poem in general, after commending one particular passage, sufficiently proves him a perfect stranger to many subsequent parts of the work; yet his remark on the inequality of the Poet is just. Ercilla is certainly unequal; but, with all his defects, he appears to me one of the most extraordinary and engaging characters in the poetical world. Perhaps I am a little partial to him, from the accidental circumstance of having first read his poem with a departed friend, whose opinions are very dear to me, and who was particularly fond of this military Bard. However this may be, my idea of Ercilla's merit has led me to hazard the following extensive sketch of his Work: — it has swelled to a much larger size than I at first intended; for I was continually tempted to extend it, by the desire of not injuring the peculiar excellencies of this wonderful Poet. If I have not utterly failed in that desire, the English reader will be enabled to judge, and to enjoy an author, who, considering his subject and its execution, may be said to stand single and unparalleled in the host of Poets. His beauties and his defects are of so obvious a nature, that I shall not enlarge upon them; but let it be remembered, that his poem was composed amidst the toils and perils of the most fatiguing and hazardous service, and that his verses were sometimes written on scraps of leather, from the want of better materials. His style is remarkably pure and perspicuous, and, notwithstanding the restraint of rhyme, it has frequently all the ease, the spirit, and the volubility of Homer. I wish not, however, to conceal his defects; and I have therefore given a very fair account of the strange episode he intro-

duces concerning the history of Dido, which has justly fallen under the ridicule of Voltaire. I must however observe, as an apology for Ercilla, that many Bards of his country have considered it as a point of honour to defend the reputation of this injured lady, and to attack Virgil with a kind of poetical Quixotism for having slandered the chastity of so spotless a heroine. If my memory does not deceive me, both Lope de Vega and Quevedo have employed their pens as the champions of Dido. We may indeed very readily join the laugh of the lively Frenchman against

SONETO

DE LA SEÑORA DOÑA LEONOR DE ICIZ,
SEÑORA DE LA BARONIA DE RAFALES
A DON ALONSO DE ERCILLA.

Mil bronce para estatuas ya forxados,
Mil lauros de tus obras premio honroso
Te ofrece España, Ercilla generoso,
Por tu pluma y tu lanza tan ganados.

Hourese tu valor entre soldados,
Invidie tu nobleza el valeroso,
Y busque en tí el poeta mas famoso
Lima para sus versos mas limados.

Derrame por el mundo tus loores
La fama, y eternice tu memoria,
Porque jamás el tiempo la consume.

Gocen ya, sin temor de que hay mayores
Tus hechos, y tus libros de igual gloria,
Pues la han ganado igual la espada y pluma.

against our Poet on this occasion ; but let us recollect that Ercilla has infinitely more Homeric spirit, and that his poem contains more genuine Epic beauties, than can be found in Voltaire.

Ercilla has been honoured with many poetical encomiums by the writers of his own country ; and, as I believe the most elegant compliment which has been paid to his genius is the production of a Spanish lady, I shall close this account of him with a translation of the Sonnet, in which she celebrates both the Hero and the Poet.

SONNET

FROM THE LADY LEONORA DE ICIZ,
BARONESS OF RAFALES,
TO DON ALONZO DE ERCILLA.

Marble, that forms the Hero's mimic frame,
And laurels, that reward the Poet's strain,
Accept, Ercilla, from thy grateful Spain !
Thy sword and pen alike this tribute claim.
Our Warriors honor thy heroic name ;
Thy birth is envy'd by Ambition's train ;
Thy verses teach the Bard of happiest vein
A finer polish, and a nobler aim.
May glory round the world thy merit spread !
In Memory's volume may thy praises stand
In characters that time shall ne'er destroy !
Thy songs, and thy exploits, without the dread
To be surpass'd by a superior hand,
With equal right their equal fame enjoy !

A SKETCH OF THE ARAUCANA.

THE Poem of Ercilla opens with the following exposition of his subject :

I Sing not love of ladies, nor of fights
 Devis'd for gentle dames by courteous knights,
 Nor feasts, nor tourneys, nor that tender care
 Which prompts the Gallant to regale the Fair ;
 But the bold deeds of Valor's fav'rite train,
 Those undegenerate sons of warlike Spain,
 Who made Arauco their stern laws embrace,
 And bent beneath their yoke her untam'd race.
 Of tribes distinguish'd in the field I sing ;
 Of nations who disdain the name of King ;
 Courage, that danger only taught to grow,
 And challenge honour from a generous foe ;
 And persevering toils of purest fame,
 And feats that aggrandize the Spanish name :
 For the brave actions of the vanquish'd spread
 The brightest glory round the victor's head.

He then addresses his work to his sovereign, Philip the Second, and devotes his first Canto to the description of that part of the new world which forms the scene of his action, and is called Arauco ; a district in the province of Chile. He paints the singular character and various customs of its warlike inhabitants with great clearness and spirit. In many points they bear a striking resemblance to the ancient Germans, as they are drawn with a kind of poetical energy by the strong pencil of Tacitus. The first Canto closes with a brief account how this martial province was subdued by a Spanish officer named Valdivia ; with an
 intimation

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intimation that his negligence in his new dominion gave birth to those important exploits which the Poet proposes to celebrate.

CANTO II.

ERCILLA begins his Cantos much in the manner of Ariosto, with a moral reflection; sometimes rather too much dilated, but generally expressed in easy, elegant, and spirited verse.—The following lines faintly imitate the two first stanzas of his second Canto :

Many there are who, in this mortal strife,
Have reach'd the slippery heights of splendid life :
For Fortune's ready hand its succour lent ;
Smiling she rais'd them up the steep ascent,
To hurl them headlong from that lofty seat
To which she led their unsuspecting feet ;
E'en at the moment when all fears disperse,
And their proud fancy sees no sad reverse.
Little they think, beguil'd by fair success,
That Joy is but the herald of Distress :
The hasty wing of time escapes their sight,
And those dark evils that attend his flight :
Vainly they dream, with gay presumption warm,
Fortune for them will take a steadier form ;
She, unconcern'd at what her victims feel,
Turns with her wonted haste her fatal wheel.

After blaming his countrymen for abusing their good fortune, the Poet celebrates, in the following spirited manner, the eagerness and indignation with which the Indians prepared to wreak their vengeance on their Spanish oppressors :

The Indians first, by novelty dismay'd,
As Gods rever'd us, and as Gods obey'd ;
But when they found we were of woman born,
Their homage turn'd to enmity and scorn :

Their childish error, when our weakness show'd,
 They blush'd at what their ignorance bestow'd ;
 Fiercely they burnt, with anger and with shame,
 To see their masters but of mortal frame.
 Disdaining cold and cowardly delay,
 They seek atonement, on no distant day :
 Prompt and resolv'd, in quick debate they join,
 'To form of deep revenge their dire design.
 Impatient that their bold decree should spread,
 And shake the world around with sudden dread,
 Th' assembling Chieftains led so large a train,
 'Their ready host o'erspread th' extensive plain.
 No summons now the soldier's heart requires ;
 'The thirst of battle every breast inspires ;
 No pay, no promise of reward, they ask,
 Keen to accomplish their spontaneous task ;
 And, by the force of one avenging blow,
 Crush and annihilate their foreign foe.
 Of some brave Chiefs, who to this council came,
 Well may'st thou, Memory, preserve the name ;
 Tho' rude and savage, yet of noble soul,
 Justly they claim their place on Glory's roll,
 Who robbing Spain of many a gallant son,
 In so confin'd a space such victories won ;
 Whose fame some living Spaniards yet may spread,
 Too well attested by our warlike dead.

The Poet proceeds to mention, in the manner of Homer, but in a much shorter catalogue, the principal chieftains, and the number of their respective vassals.

Uncouthly as their names must sound to an English ear, it seems necessary to run through the list, as these free and noble-minded savages act so distinguished a part in the course of the poem.—Tucapel stands first ; renowned for the most inveterate enmity to the Christians, and leader of three thousand vassals : Angol, a valiant youth, attended by four thousand : Cayocupil, with three ; and Millarapuc, an elder chief, with

with five thousand : Paycabi, with three thousand ; and Lemolemo, with six : Maregnano, Gualèmo, and Lebopia, with three thousand each : Elicura, distinguished by strength of body and detestation of servitude, with six thousand ; and the ancient Colocolo with a superior number : Ongolmo, with four thousand ; and Puren, with six ; the fierce and gigantic Lincoya with a still larger train. Peteguelen, lord of the valley of Arauco, prevented from personal attendance by the Christians, dispatches six thousand of his retainers to the assembly : the most distinguished of his party are Thomè and Andalican. The Lord of the maritime province of Pilmayquen, the bold Caupolican, is also unable to appear at the opening of the council. Many other Chieftains attended, whose names the Poet suppresses, lest his prolixity should offend. As they begin their business in the style of the ancient Germans, with a plentiful banquet, they soon grow exasperated with liquor, and a violent quarrel ensues concerning the command of the forces for the projected war : an honour which almost every chieftain was arrogant enough to challenge for himself. In the midst of this turbulent debate, the ancient Colocolo delivers the following harangue, which Voltaire prefers (and I think with great justice) to the speech of Nestor, on a similar occasion, in the first Iliad.

Assembled Chiefs ! ye guardians of the land !
 Think not I mourn from thirst of lost command,
 To find your rival spirits thus pursue
 A post of honour which I deem my due.
 These marks of age, you see, such thoughts disown
 In me, departing for the world unknown ;
 But my warm love, which ye have long possess'd,
 Now prompts that counsel which you'll find the best.
 Why should we now for marks of glory jar ?
 Why wish to spread our martial name afar ?
 Crush'd as we are by Fortune's cruel stroke,
 And bent beneath an ignominious yoke,
 Ill can our minds such noble pride maintain,
 While the fierce Spaniard holds our galling chain.
 Your generous fury here ye vainly shew ;
 Ah ! rather pour it on th' embattled foe !

What frenzy has your souls of sense bereav'd ?
 Ye rush to self-perdition, unperceiv'd.
 'Gainst your own vitals would ye lift those hands,
 Whose vigor ought to burst oppression's bands ?

If a desire of death this rage create,
 O die not yet in this disgraceful state !

Turn your keen arms, and this indignant flame, }
 Against the breast of those who sink your fame, }
 Who made the world a witness of your shame. }
 Haste ye to cast these hated bonds away,
 In this the vigor of your souls display ;
 Nor blindly lavish, from your country's veins,
 Blood that may yet redeem her from her chains.

E'en while I thus lament, I still admire
 The fervor of your souls ; they give me fire :
 But, justly trembling at their fatal bent,
 I dread some dire calamitous event ;
 Lest in your rage Dissention's frantic hand
 Should cut the sinews of our native land.
 If such its doom, my thread of being burst,
 And let your old compeer expire the first !
 Shall this shrunk frame, thus bow'd by age's weight,
 Live the weak witness of a nation's fate ?
 No : let some friendly sword, with kind relief,
 Forbid its sinking in that scene of grief.
 Happy whose eyes in timely darkness close,
 Sav'd from that worst of sights, his country's woes !
 Yet, while I can, I make your weal my care,
 And for the public good my thoughts declare.

Equal ye are in courage and in worth ;
 Heaven has assign'd to all an equal birth :
 In wealth, in power, and majesty of soul,
 Each Chief seems worthy of the world's controul.
 These gracious gifts, not gratefully beheld,
 To this dire strife your daring minds impell'd.

Eut on your generous valor I depend,
 That all our country's woes will swiftly end.

A Leader still our present state demands,
 To guide to vengeance our impatient bands ;
 Fit for this hardy task that Chief I deem,
 Who longest may sustain a massive beam :
 Your rank is equal, let your force be try'd,
 And for the strongest let his strength decide.

The Chieftains acquiesce in this proposal ; which, as Voltaire justly observes, is very natural in a nation of savages. The beam is produced, and of a size so enormous, that the Poet declares himself afraid to specify its weight. The first Chieftains who engage in the trial support it on their shoulders five and six hours each ; Tucapel fourteen ; and Lincoza more than double that number ; when the assembly, considering his strength as almost supernatural, is eager to bestow on him the title of General ; but in the moment he is exulting in this new honour, Caupolican arrives without attendants. His person and character are thus described by the Poet :

Tho' from his birth one darken'd eye he drew
 ('The viewless orb was of the granate's hue)
 Nature, who partly robb'd him of his sight,
 Repaid this failure by redoubled might.
 This noble youth was of the highest state ;
 His actions honour'd, and his words of weight :
 Prompt and resolv'd in every generous cause,
 A friend to Justice and her sternest laws :
 Fashion'd for sudden feats, or toils of length,
 His limbs possess'd both suppleness and strength :
 Dauntless his mind, determin'd and adroit
 In every quick and hazardous exploit.

This accomplished Chieftain is received with great joy by the assembly ; and, having surpassed Lincoza by many degrees in the trial, is invested with the supreme command. He dispatches a small party to attack a neighbouring Spanish fort : they execute his orders, and make

a vigorous assault. After a sharp conflict they are repulsed; but in the moment of their retreat Caupolican arrives with his army to their support. The Spaniards in despair evacuate the fort, and make their escape in the night: the news is brought to Valdivia, the Spanish Commander in the city of Conception;—and with his resolution to punish the Barbarians the canto concludes.

C A N T O III.

O CURELESS malady! Oh fatal pest!
 Embrac'd with ardor and with pride carest;
 Thou common vice, thou most contagious ill,
 Bane of the mind, and frenzy of the will!
 Thou foe to private and to public health;
 Thou dropsy of the soul, that thirsts for wealth,
 Infatiate Avarice!—'tis from thee we trace
 The various misery of our mortal race.

With this spirited and generous invective against that prevailing vice of his countrymen, which sullied the lustre of their most brilliant exploits, Ercilla opens his 3d canto. He does not scruple to assert, that the enmity of the Indians arose from the avaricious severity of their Spanish oppressors; and he accuses Valdivia on this head, though he gives him the praise of a brave and gallant officer. — This Spaniard, on the first intelligence of the Indian insurrection, dispatched his scouts from the city where he commanded. They do not return. Pressed by the impatient gallantry of his troops, Valdivia marches out:—they soon discover the mangled heads of his messengers fixed up as a spectacle of terror on the road. Valdivia deliberates what measures to pursue. His army entreat him to continue his march. He consents, being piqued by their insinuations of his disgracing the Spanish arms. An Indian ally brings him an account that twenty thousand of the confederated Indians are waiting to destroy him in the valley of Tucapel. He still presses forward; arrives

rives in fight of the fort which the Indians had destroyed, and engages them in a most obstinate battle; in the description of which, the Poet introduces an original and striking simile, in the following manner:

The steady pikemen of the savage band,
Waiting our hasty charge, in order stand;
But when th' advancing Spaniard aim'd his stroke,
Their ranks, to form a hollow square, they broke;
An easy passage to our troop they leave,
And deep within their lines their foes receive;
Their files resum'g then the ground they gave,
Bury the Christians in that closing grave.

As the keen Crocodile, who loves to lay
His silent ambush for his finny prey,
Hearing the scaly tribe with sportive sound
Advance, and cast a muddy darkness round,
Opens his mighty mouth, with caution, wide,
And, when th' unwary fish within it glide,
Closing with eager haste his hollow jaw,
Thus satiates with their lives his rav'nous maw:
So, in their toils, without one warning thought,
The murd'rous foe our little squadron caught
With quick destruction, in a fatal strife,
From whence no Christian soldier 'scap'd with life.

Such was the fate of the advanced guard of the Spaniards. The Poet then describes the conflict of the main army with great spirit:—ten Spaniards distinguish themselves by signal acts of courage, but are all cut in pieces. The battle proceeds thus:

The hostile sword, now deeply dy'd in blood,
Drench'd the wide field with many a sanguine flood;
Courage still grows to form the fierce attack,
But wasted vigor makes the combat slack:
No pause they seek, to gain exhausted breath,
No rest, except the final rest of death:

The

The wariest combatants now only try
To snatch the sweets of vengeance ere they die.

The fierce disdain of death, and scorn of flight,
Give to our scanty troop such wond'rous might,
The Araucanian host begin to yield;
They quit with loss and shame the long-fought field:
They fly; and their pursuers shake the plain
With joyous shouts of Victory and Spain.
But dire mischance, and Fate's resistless sway,
Gave a strange issue to the dreadful day.

An Indian Youth, a noble Chieftain's son,
Who as our friend his martial feats begun,
Our Leader's Page, by him to battle train'd,
Who now beside him the hard fight sustain'd,
As he beheld his kindred Chiefs retire,
Felt an indignant flash of patriot fire;
And thus incited to a glorious stand
The flying champions of his native land:

Misguided Country, by vain fear possess'd,
Ah whither dost thou turn thy timid breast?
Ye brave compatriots, shall your ancient fame
Be vilely buried in this field of shame?
Those laws, those rights, ye gloried to defend,
All perish, all by this ignoble end?
From Chiefs of dreaded power, and honor'd worth,
Ye sink to abject slaves, the scorn of earth!
To the pure founders of your boasted race
Ye give the cureless wound of deep disgrace!
Behold the wasted vigor of your foe!
See, bath'd in sweat and blood, their couriers blow!
Lose not your mental force, your martial fires,
Our best inheritance from generous fires;
Sink not the noble Araucanian name,
From glory's summit to the depths of shame;
Fly, fly the servitude your souls detest!
To the keen sword oppose the dauntless breast.

Why

Why shew ye frames endued with manly power,
 Yet shrink from danger in the trying hour ?
 Fix in your minds the friendly truth I speak ;
 Vain are your fears, your terror blind and weak :
 Now make your names immortal ; now restore
 Freedom's lost blessings to your native shore :
 Now turn, while Fame and Victory invite,
 While prosperous Fortune calls you to the fight :
 Or yet a moment cease, O cease to fly,
 And for our country learn of me to die !

As thus he speaks, his eager steps advance,
 And 'gainst the Spanish Chief he points his lance ;
 To lead his kindred fugitives from flight,
 Singly he dares to tempt th' unequal fight :
 Against our circling arms, that round him shine,
 Eager he darts amidst the thickest line,
 Keen as, when chaf'd by summer's fiery beam,
 The young Stag plunges in the cooling stream.

The Poet proceeds to relate the great agility and valor displayed by *Lantaro*, for such is the name of this gallant and patriotic Youth : and, as *Ercilla* has a soul sufficiently heroic to do full justice to the virtues of an enemy, he gives him the highest praise. Having mentioned on the occasion many heroes of ancient history, he exclaims :

Say, of these famous Chiefs can one exceed
 Or match this young Barbarian's noble deed ?
 Vict'ry for them, her purpose unexplor'd,
 Tempted by equal chance their happy sword :
 What risk, what peril did they boldly meet,
 Save where Ambition urg'd the splendid feat ;
 Or mightier Int'rest fir'd the daring mind,
 Which makes a Hero of the fearful Hind ?
 Many there are who with a brave disdain
 Face all the perils of the deathful plain,

Who, fir'd by hopes of glory, nobly dare,
 Yet fail the stroke of adverse chance to bear;
 With animated fire their spirit shines,
 Till the short splendor of their day declines;
 But all their valor, all their strength expires,
 When fickle Fortune from their side retires.
 This youthful Hero, when the die was cast,
 War's dire decree against his country past,
 Made the stern Power the finish'd cause resume,
 And finally reverse the cruel doom:
 He, by his efforts in the dread debate,
 Forc'd the determin'd will of adverse Fate,
 From shouting Triumph rush'd the palm to tear,
 And fix'd it on the brow of faint Despair.

Caupolican, leading his army back to the charge, in consequence of Lantaro's efforts in their favour, obtains a complete victory. The Spaniards are all slain in the field, except their Commander Valdivia, who flies, attended only by a priest; but he is soon taken prisoner, and conducted before the Indian Chief, who is inclined to spare his life; when an elder savage, called Leocato, in a sudden burst of indignation, kills him with his club.

All the people of Arauco assemble in a great plain to celebrate their victory: old and young, women and children, unite in the festival; and the trees that surround the scene of their assembly are decorated with the heads and spoils of their slaughtered enemies.

They meditate the total extermination of the Spaniards from their country, and even a descent on Spain. The General makes a prudent speech to restrain their impetuosity; and afterwards, bestowing just applause on the brave exploit of the young Lantaro, appoints him his lieutenant. In the midst of the festivity, Caupolican receives advice that a party of fourteen Spanish horsemen had attacked some of his forces with great havoc. He dispatches Lantaro to oppose them.

CANTO IV.

A PARTY of fourteen gallant Spaniards, who had set forth from the city of Imperial to join Valdivia, not being apprized of his unhappy fate, are surprized by the enemy where they expected to meet their Commander ;—they defend themselves with great valor. They are informed by a friendly Indian of the fate of Valdivia. They attempt to retreat ; but are surrounded by numbers of the Araucanians :—when the Poet introduces the following instance of Spanish heroism, which I insert as a curious stroke of their military character :

Here, cried a Spaniard, far unlike his race,
 Nor shall his abject name my verse debase.
 Marking his few associates march along,
 O that our band were but a hundred strong !
 The brave Gonfalo with disdain replied :
 Rather let two be sever'd from our side,
 Kind Heaven ! that Memory may our feats proclaim
 And call our little troop The Twelve of Fame !

They continue to fight with great bravery against superior numbers, when Lantaro arrives with a fresh army against them. Still undaunted, they only resolve to sell their lives as dear as possible. Seven of them are cut to pieces.—In the midst of the slaughter a furious thunder and hail storm arises, by which incident the surviving seven escape. The tempest is described with the following original simile :

Now in the turbid air a stormy cloud
 Spreads its terrific shadow o'er the crowd ;
 The gathering darkness hides the solar ray,
 And to th' affrighted earth denies the day ;
 The rushing winds, to which the forests yield,
 Rive the tall tree, and desolate the field :

In drops distinct and rare now falls the rain;
 And now with thickening fury beats the plain.
 As the bold master of the martial drum,
 Ere to the shock th' advancing armies come,
 In awful notes, that shake the heaven's high arch,
 Intrepid strikes the slow and solemn march;
 But, when the charging heroes yield their breath,
 Doubles the horrid harmony of death:
 So the dark tempest, with encreasing sound,
 Pours the loud deluge on the echoing ground.

The few Spaniards that escape take refuge in a neighbouring fort; which they abandon the following day on hearing the fate of Valdivia. Lantaro returns, and receives new honors and new forces from his General, to march against a Spanish army, which departs from the city of Penco under the command of Villagran, an experienced officer, to revenge the death of Valdivia. The departure of the troops from Penco is described, and the distress of the women.—Villagran marches with expedition towards the frontiers of Arauco. He arrives at a dangerous pass, and finds Lantaro, with his army of 10,100 Indians, advantageously posted on the heights, and waiting with great steadiness and discipline to give him battle.

C A N T O V.

LANTARO with great difficulty restrains the eager Indians in their post on the rock. He suffers a few to descend and skirmish on the lower ground, where several distinguish themselves in single combat. The Spaniards attempt in vain to dislodge the army of Lantaro by an attack of their cavalry:—they afterwards fire on them from six pieces of cannon.

The next air feels the thunder of the fight,
 And smoke and flame involve the mountain's height;

Earth

Earth seems to open as the flames aspire,
And new volcano's spout destructive fire.

Lantaro saw no hopes of life allow'd,
Save by dispersing this terrific cloud,
That pours its lightning with so dire a shock,
Smiting his lessen'd host, who strew the rock ;
And to the troop of Leucoton the brave
His quick command the skilful Leader gave :
He bids them fiercely to the charge descend,
And thus exhorts aloud each ardent friend :

My faithful partners in bright victory's meed,
Whom fortune summons to this noble deed,
Behold the hour when your prevailing might
Shall prove that Justice guards us in the fight !
Now firmly fix your lances in the rest,
And rush to honor o'er each hostile breast ;
Through every bar your bloody passage force,
Nor let a brother's fall impede your course ;
Be yon dread instruments of death your aim ;
Possess of these you gain eternal fame :
The camp shall follow your triumphant trace,
And own you leaders in the glorious chace.

While these bold words their ardent zeal exalt,
They rush impetuous to the rash assault.

The Indians, undismayed by a dreadful slaughter, gain possession of the cannon.—Villagran makes a short but spirited harangue to his flying soldiers. He is unable to rally them : and, chusing rather to die than to survive so ignominious a defeat, rushes into the thickest of the enemy :—when the Poet, leaving his fate uncertain, concludes the canto.

C A N T O VI.

THE valiant mind is privileg'd to feel
 Superior to each turn of Fortune's wheel;
 Chance has no power its value to debase,
 Or brand it with the mark of deep disgrace:
 So thought the noble Villagran, our Chief,
 Who chose that death should end his present grief,
 And smooth the horrid path, with thorns o'erspread,
 Which Destiny condemn'd his feet to tread.

With the preceding encomium on the spirit of this unfortunate officer the Poet opens his 6th Canto. Thirteen of the most faithful soldiers of Villagran, perceiving their Leader fallen motionless under the fury of his enemies, make a desperate effort to preserve him.—Being placed again on his horse by these generous deliverers, he recovers from the blow which had stunned him; and by singular exertion, with the assistance of his spirited little troop, effects his escape, and rejoins his main army; whom he endeavours in vain to lead back against the triumphant Araucanians. The pursuit becomes general, and the Poet describes the horrid massacre committed by the Indians on all the unhappy fugitives that fell into their hands.—The Spaniards in their flight are stopt by a narrow pass fortified and guarded by a party of Indians. Villagran forces the rude entrenchment in person, and conducts part of his army safe through the pass; but many attempting other roads over the mountainous country, are either lost among the precipices of the rocks, or pursued and killed by the Indians.

C A N T O VII.

THE remains of the Spanish army, after infinite loss and fatigue, at last reach the city of Concepcion.

Their entrance in these walls let fancy paint,
 O'erwhelm'd with anguish, and with labor faint:

These

These gash'd with ghastly wounds, those writh'd with pain,
And some their human semblance scarce retain;
They seem unhappy spirits 'scap'd from hell,
Yet wanting voice their misery to tell.
Their pangs to all their rolling eyes express,
And silence most declares their deep distress.

When weariness and shame at length allow'd
Their tongues to satisfy th' enquiring crowd,
From the pale citizens, amaz'd to hear
A tale surpassing e'en their wildest fear,
One general sound of lamentation rose,
That deeply solemniz'd a nation's woes;
The neighbouring mansions to their grief reply,
And every wall return'd the mournful cry.

The inhabitants of Concepcion, expecting every instant the triumphant Lantaro at their gates, resolve to abandon their city. A gallant veteran upbraids their cowardly design. They disregard his reproaches, and evacuate the place:—when the Poet introduces the following instance of female heroism :

'Tis just that Fame a noble deed display,
Which claims remembrance, even to the day
When Memory's hand no more the pen shall use,
But sink in darkness and her being lose:
'The lovely Mencia, an accomplish'd Dame,
A valiant spirit in a tender frame,
Here firmly shew'd, as this dread scene began,
Courage now found not in the heart of man.
The bed of sickness 'twas her chance to press;
But when she heard the city's loud distress,
Snatching such weapons as the time allow'd,
She rush'd indignant midst the flying crowd.

Now up the neighbouring hill they slowly wind,
And, bending oft their mournful eyes behind,

Cast a sad look, of every hope bereft,
On those rich plains, the precious home they left.

More poignant grief see generous Mencia feel,
More noble proof she gives of patriot zeal :
Waving a sword in her heroic hand,
In their tame march she stopt the timid band ;
Cross'd the ascending road before their van,
And, turning to the city, thus began :

Thou valiant nation, whose unequall'd toils
Have dearly purchas'd fame and golden spoils,
Where is the courage ye so oft display'd
Against this foe, from whom ye shrink dismay'd ?
Where those high hopes, and that aspiring flame,
Which made immortal praise your constant aim ?
Where your firm souls, that every chance defied,
And native strength, that form'd your noble pride ?
Ah whither would you fly, in selfish fear,
In frantic haste, with no pursuer near ?

How oft has censure to your hearts assign'd
Ardor too keenly brave and rashly blind ;
Eager to dart amid the doubtful fray,
Scorning the useful aid of wise delay ?
Have we not seen you with contempt oppose,
And bend beneath your yoke unnumber'd foes ;
Attempt and execute designs so bold,
Ye grew immortal as ye heard them told ?

Turn ! to your people turn a pitying eye,
To whom your fears these happy seats deny !
Turn ! and survey this fair, this fertile land,
Whose ready tribute waits your lordly hand ;
Survey its pregnant mines, its sands of gold ;
Survey the flock now wandering from its fold,
Mark how it vainly seeks, in wild despair,
The faithless shepherd, who forsakes his care.

E'en the dumb creatures, of domestic kind,
Though not endow'd with man's discerning mind,

Now shew the semblance of a reasoning soul,
And in their masters misery condole:
The stronger animals, of sterner heart,
Take in this public woe a feeling part;
Their plaintive roar, that speaks their sense aright,
Justly upbraids your ignominious flight.

Ye fly from quiet, opulence, and fame,
Purchas'd by valor, your acknowledg'd claim;
From these ye fly, to seek a foreign seat,
Where dastard fugitives no welcome meet.
How deep the shame, an abject life to spend
In poor dependance on a pitying friend!
Turn! let the brave their only choice await,
Or honourable life, or instant fate.

Return! return! O quit this path of shame!
Stain not by fear your yet un sullied name;
Myself I offer, if our foes advance,
To rush the foremost on the hostile lance;
My actions then shall with my words agree,
And what a woman dares your eyes shall see.
Return! return! she cried; but cried in vain;
Her fire seem'd frenzy to the coward train.

The dastardly inhabitants of the city, unmoved by this remonstrance of the noble Donna Mencia de Nidos, continue their precipitate flight, and, after twelve days of confusion and fatigue, reach the city of Santiago, in the valley of Mapocho. Lantaro arrives in the mean time before the walls they had deserted:—and the Poet concludes his canto with a spirited description of the barbaric fury with which the Indians entered the abandoned city, and destroyed by fire the rich and magnificent mansions of their Spanish oppressors.

C A N T O VIII.

LANTARO is recalled from his victorious exploits, to assist at a general assembly of the Indians, in the valley of Arauco. The different Chieftains deliver their various sentiments concerning the war, after their Leader Caupolican has declared his design to pursue the Spaniards with unceasing vengeance. The veteran Colocolo proposes a plan for their military operations. An ancient Augur, named Puchecalco, denounces ruin on all the projects of his countrymen, in the name of the Indian Dæmon Eponamon. He recites the omens of their destruction. The fierce Tucapel, provoked to frenzy by this gloomy prophet, strikes him dead in the midst of his harangue, by a sudden blow of his mace. Caupolican orders the murderous Chieftain to be led to instant death. He defends himself with success against numbers who attempt to seize him. Lantaro, pleased by this exertion of his wonderful force and valour, intreats the General to forgive what had passed; and, at his intercession, Tucapel is received into favour. Lantaro then closes the business of the assembly, by recommending the plan proposed by Colocolo, and intreating that he may himself be entrusted with a detached party of five hundred Indians, with which he engages to reduce the city of Santiago. His proposal is accepted. The Chieftains, having finished their debate, declare their resolutions to their people; and, after their usual festivity, Caupolican, with the main army, proceeds to attack the city of Imperial.

C A N T O IX.

THE Poet opens this Canto with an apology for a miracle, which he thinks it necessary to relate, as it was attested by the whole Indian army; and, though it does not afford him any very uncommon or sublime

lime imagery, he embellishes the wonder he describes, by his easy and spirited versification, of which the following lines are an imperfect copy :

When to the city's weak defenceless wall
Its foes were rushing, at their trumpet's call,
The air grew troubled with portentous sound,
And mournful omens multiplied around ;
With furious shock the elements engage,
And all the winds contend in all their rage.

From clashing clouds their mingled torrents gush,
And rain and hail with rival fury rush.
Bolts of loud thunder, floods of lightning rend
The opening skies, and into earth descend.

O'er the vast army equal terrors spread ;
No mind escapes the universal dread ;
No breast, tho' arm'd with adamant power,
Holds its firm vigor in this horrid hour ;
For now the fierce Eponamon appears,
And in a Dragon's form augments their fears ;
Involving flames around the Damon dwell,
Who speaks his mandate in a hideous yell :
He bids his votaries with haste invest
The trembling city, by despair deprest.
Where'er th' invading squadrons force their way,
He promises their arms an easy prey.
Spare not (he cry'd) in the relentless strife,
One Spanish battlement, one Christian life !
He spoke, and, while the host his will adore,
Melts into vapour, and is seen no more.

Quick as he vanish'd Nature's struggles cease ;
The troubled elements are sooth'd to peace :
The winds no longer rage with boundless ire,
But, hush'd in silence, to their caves retire :
The clouds disperse, restoring as they fly
The unobstructed sun and azure sky :

H h

Fear

Fear only held its place, and still possess
 Usurp'd dominion o'er the boldest breast.

The tempest ceas'd, and heaven, serenely bright,
 Array'd the moisten'd earth in joyous light :
 When, pois'd upon a cloud that swiftly flew,
 A Female form descended to their view,
 Clad in the radiance of so rich a veil,
 As made the sun's meridian lustre pale ;
 For it outshone his golden orb as far
 As his full blaze outlines the twinkling star.
 Her sacred features banish all their dread,
 And o'er the host reviving comfort shed.
 An hoary Elder by her side appear'd,
 For age and sanctity of life rever'd ;
 And thus she spoke, with soft persuasive grace :
 Ah ! whither rush ye, blind devoted race ?
 Turn, while you can, towards your native plain,
 Nor 'gainst yon city point your arms in vain ;
 For God will guard his faithful Christian band,
 And give them empire o'er your bleeding land,
 Since, thankless, false, and obstinate in ill,
 You scorn submission to his sacred will.
 Yet shun those walls ; th' Almighty, there ador'd,
 There arms his people with Destruction's sword.

So spoke the Vision, with an angel's tongue,
 And thro' the spacious air to heaven she sprung.

The Indians, confounded by this miraculous interposition, disperse in disorder to their several homes ; and the Poet proceeds very gravely to affirm, that, having obtained the best information, from many individuals, concerning this miracle, that he might be very exact in his account of it, he finds it happened on the twenty-third of April, four years before he wrote the verses that describe it, and in the year of our Lord 1554. The Vision was followed by pestilence and famine among the Indians. They remain inactive during the winter, but assemble again the ensuing spring in the plains of Arauco, to renew the war.

They

They receive intelligence that the Spaniards are attempting to rebuild the city of Concepcion, and are requested by the neighbouring tribes to march to their assistance, and prevent that design. Lantaro leads a chosen band on that expedition, hoping to surprize the fort the Spaniards had erected on the ruins of their city ; but the Spanish commander, Alvarado, being apprized of their motion, sallies forth to meet the Indian party : a skirmish ensues ; the Spaniards retire to their fort ; Lantaro attempts to storm it ; a most bloody encounter ensues ; Tucapel signalizes himself in the attack ; the Indians persevere with the most obstinate valour, and, after a long conflict (described with a considerable portion of Homeric spirit) gain possession of the fort ; Alvarado and a few of his followers escape ; they are pursued, and much galled in their flight : a single Indian, named Rengo, harrasses Alvarado and two of his attendants ; the Spanish officer, provoked by the insult, turns with his two companions to punish their pursuer ; but the wily Indian secures himself on some rocky heights, and annoys them with his sling, till, despairing of revenge, they continue their flight.

C A N T O X.

THE Indians celebrate their victory with public games ; and prizes are appointed for such as excel in their various martial exercises. Leucoton is declared victor in the contest of throwing the lance, and receives a scimitar as his reward. Rengo subdues his two rivals, Cayeguan and Talco, in the exercise of wrestling, and proceeds to contend with Leucoton. After a long and severe struggle, Rengo has the misfortune to fall by an accidental failure of the ground, but, springing lightly up, engages his adversary with increasing fury ; and the canto ends without deciding the contest.

CANTO XI.

LANTARO separates the two enraged antagonists, to prevent the ill effects of their wrath. The youth Orompello, whom Leucoton had before surpassed in the contest of the lance, challenges his successful rival to wrestle : they engage, and fall together : the victory is disputed. Tucapel demands the prize for his young friend Orompello, and insults the General Caupolican. The latter is restrained from avenging the insult, by the sage advice of the veteran Colocolo, at whose request he distributes prizes of equal value to each of the claimants. To prevent farther animosities, they relinquish the rest of the appointed games, and enter into debate on the war. Lantaro is again appointed to the command of a chosen troop, and marches towards the city of St. Jago. The Spaniards, alarmed at the report of his approach, send out some forces to reconnoitre his party : a skirmish ensues : they are driven back to the city, and relate that Lantaro is fortifying a strong post at some distance, intending soon to attack the city. Villagran, the Spaniard who commanded there, being confined by illness, appoints an officer of his own name to sally forth, with all the forces he can raise, in quest of the enemy. The Spaniards fix their camp, on the approach of night, near the fort of Lantaro : they are suddenly alarmed, and summoned to arms ; but the alarm is occasioned only by a single horse without a rider, which Lantaro, aware of their approach, had turned loose towards their camp, as an insulting mode of proclaiming his late victory, in which he had taken ten of the Spanish horses.

The Spaniards pass the night under arms, resolving to attack the Indians at break of day. Lantaro had issued orders that no Indian should sally from the fort under pain of death, to prevent the advantage which the Spanish cavalry must have over his small forces in the open plain. He also commanded his soldiers to retreat with an appearance of dismay, at the first attack on the fort, and suffer a considerable number of the enemy to enter the place. This stratagem succeeds : the Spaniards rush forward with great fury : the Indians give ground, but,

soon turning with redoubled violence on those who had passed their lines, destroy many, and oblige the rest to save themselves by a precipitate flight. The Indians, forgetting the orders of their Leader, in the ardour of vengeance sally forth in pursuit of their flying enemy. Lantaro recalls them by the sound of a military horn, which he blows with the utmost violence. They return, but dare not appear in the presence of their offended Commander. He issues new restrictions; and then, summoning his soldiers together, addresses them, in a spirited, yet calm and affectionate harangue, on the necessity of martial obedience. While he is yet speaking, the Spaniards return to the attack, but are again repulsed with great loss. They retreat, and encamp at the foot of a mountain, unmolested by any pursuers.

C A N T O XII.

THE Spaniards remain in their camp, while two of their adventurous soldiers engage to return once more to the fort, and examine the state of it. On their approach, one of them, called Marcos Vaez, is saluted by his name, and promised security, by a voice from within the walls. Lantaro had formerly lived with him on terms of friendship, and now invites him into the fort. The Indian Chief harangues on the resolution and the power of his countrymen to exterminate the Spaniards, unless they submit. He proposes, however, terms of accommodation to his old friend Marcos, and specifies the tribute he should expect. The Spaniard answers with disdain, that the only tribute the Indians would receive from his countrymen would be torture and death. Lantaro replies, with great temper, that arms, and the valour of the respective nations, must determine this point; and proceeds to entertain his guest with a display of six Indians, whom he had mounted and trained to exercise on Spanish horses. The Spaniard challenges the whole party: Lantaro will not allow him to engage in any conflict, but dismisses him in peace. He recalls him, before he had proceeded far from the fort, and, telling him that his soldiers were much distressed by the want of provision, entreats him to send a supply, affirming it to be true heroism

heroism to relieve an enemy from the necessities of famine. The Spaniard subscribes to the sentiment, and engages, if possible, to comply with the request. Returning to his camp, he acquaints his Commander Villagran with all that had passed; who, suspecting some dangerous design from Lantaro, decamps hastily in the night to regain the city. The Indian Chief is severely mortified by their departure, as he had formed a project for cutting off their retreat, by letting large currents of water into the marshy ground on which the Spaniards were encamped. Despairing of being able to succeed against their city, now prepared to resist him, he returns towards Arauco, most sorely galled by his disappointment, and thus venting his anguish:

What can redeem Lantaro's wounded name?
 What plea preserve his failing arms from shame?
 Did not my ardent soul this task demand,
 Which now upbraids my unperforming hand?
 On me, on me alone can censure fall;
 Myself th' adviser and the guide of all.
 Am I the Chief who, in Fame's bright career,
 Ask'd to subdue the globe a single year?

While, at the head of this my glittering train,
 I weakly threaten Spanish walls in vain,
 Thrice has pale Cynthia, with replenish'd ray,
 Seen my ill-order'd troop in loose array;
 And the rich chariot of the blazing sun
 Has from the Scorpion to Aquarius run.
 At last, as fugitives these paths we tread,
 And mourn twice fifty brave companions dead.
 Could Fate's kind hand this hateful stain efface,
 Could death redeem me from this worse disgrace,
 My useless spear should pierce this abject heart,
 Which has so ill sustain'd a soldier's part.
 Unworthy thought! the mean ignoble blow
 Would only tempt my proud and vaunting foe
 To boast that I prefer'd, in fear's alarm,
 My own weak weapon to his stronger arm.

By

By Hell I swear, who rules the fanguine strife,
If Chance allow me yet a year of life,
I'll chase these foreign lords from Chile's strand,
And Spanish blood shall saturate our land.
No changing season, neither cold nor heat,
Shall make the firmer step of War retreat ;
Nor shall the earth, nor hell's expanding cave,
From this avenging arm one Spaniard save.

Now the brave Chief, with solemn ardor, swore
To his dear native home to turn no more ;
From no fierce sun, no stormy winds to fly,
But patiently abide the varying sky,
And spurn all thoughts of pleasure and of ease,
Till rescu'd fame his tortur'd soul appease ;
Till earth confess the brave Lantaro's hand
Has clos'd the glorious work his spirit plann'd.
In these resolves the Hero found relief,
And thus relax'd the o'erstrain'd cord of grief ;
Whose pressure gall'd him with such mental pain,
That frenzy almost seiz'd his burning brain.

Lantaro continues his march into an Indian district, from which he collects a small increase of force ; and, after addressing his soldiers concerning the expediency of strict military discipline, and the cause of their late ill success, he turns again towards the city of St. Jago ; but, receiving intelligence on his road of its preparations for defence, he again suspends his design, and fortifies a post, which he chuses with the hope of collecting still greater numbers to assist him in his projected enterprize. The Spaniards at St. Jago are eager to sally in quest of Lantaro, but their Commander Villagran was absent on an expedition to the city of Imperial. In returning from thence he passes near the post of Lantaro. An Indian ally acquaints him with its situation, and, at the earnest request of the Spanish officer, agrees to conduct him, by a short though difficult road, over a mountain, to attack the fort by surprise. The Poet suspends his narration of this interesting event, to relate the arrival of new forces from Spain in America ; and he now be-
gins

gins to appear himself on the field of action. "Hitherto," says he, "I have described the scenes in which I was not present; yet I have collected my information from no partial witnesses, and I have recorded only those events in which both parties agree. Since it is known that I have shed so much blood in support of what I affirm, my future narration will be more authentic; for I now speak as an ocular witness of every action, unblinded by partiality, which I disdain, and resolved to rob no one of the praise which he deserves."

After pleading his youth as an apology for the defects of his style, and after declaring that his only motive for writing was the ardent desire to preserve so many valiant actions from perishing in oblivion, the Poet proceeds to relate the arrival of the Marquis de Canete as Viceroy in Peru, and the spirited manner in which he corrected the abuses of that country. The canto concludes with reflections on the advantages of loyalty, and the miseries of rebellion.

C A N T O XIII.

SPANISH deputies from the province of Chile implore assistance from the new Viceroy of Peru: he sends them a considerable succour, under the conduct of Don Garcia, his son. The Poet is himself of this band, and relates the splendid preparations for the enterprize, and the embarkation of the troops in ten vessels, which sail from Lima towards the coast of Chile. Having described part of this voyage, he returns to the bold exploit of Villagran, and the adventures of Lantaro, the most interesting of all the Araucanian Heroes, whom he left securing himself in his sequestered fort.

A path where watchful centinels were spread,
A single path, to this lone station led:
No other signs of human step were trac'd;
For the vex'd land was desolate and waste.
It chanc'd that night the noble Chieftain prest
His anxious mistress to his gallant breast,

The

The fair Guacolda, for whose charms he burn'd,
 And whose warm heart his faithful love return'd.
 That night beheld the warlike savage rest,
 Free from th' incumbrance of his martial vest ;
 That night alone allow'd his eyes to close
 In the deceitful calm of short repose :
 Sleep prest upon him like the weight of death ;
 But soon he starts, alarm'd, and gasps for breath.
 The fair Guacolda, with a trembling tongue,
 Anxious enquires from whence his anguish sprung.

My lovely Fair ! the brave Lantaro cries,
 An hideous vision struck my scornful eyes :
 Methought that instant a fierce Chief of Spain
 Mock'd my vain spear with insolent disdain ;
 His forceful arm my failing powers o'ercame,
 And strength and motion seem'd to quit my frame.
 But still the vigor of my soul I keep,
 And its keen anger burst the bonds of sleep.

With quick despair, the troubled Fair one said,
 Alas ! thy dreams confirm the ills I dread.
 'Tis come—the object of my boding fears !
 Thy end, the source of my unceasing tears.
 Yet not so wretched is this mournful hour,
 Nor o'er me, Fortune, canst thou boast such power,
 But that kind death may shorten all my woes,
 And give the agonizing scene to close.
 Let my stern fate its cruel rage employ,
 And hurl me from the throne of love and joy ;
 Whatever pangs its malice may devise,
 It cannot rend affection's stronger ties.
 Tho' horrible the blow my fears foresee,
 A second blow will set my spirit free ;
 For cold on earth thy frame shall ne'er be found,
 While mine with useless being loads the ground.

The Chief, transported with her tender charms,
 Closely around her neck entwined his arms ;

NOTES TO THE

And, while fond tears her snowy breast bedew'd,
 Thus with redoubled love his speech pursu'd :
 My generous Fair, thy gloomy thoughts dismiss ;
 Nor let dark omens interrupt our bliss,
 And cloud these moments that with transport shine,
 While my exulting heart thus feels thee mine.
 Thy troubled fancy prompts my mutual sigh ;
 Not that I think the hour of danger nigh :
 But Love so melts me with his soft controul,
 Impossibilities alarm my soul.
 If thy kind wishes bid Lantaro live,
 Who to this frame the wound of death can give ?
 Tho' 'gainst me all the powers of earth combine,
 My life is subject to no hand but thine.
 Who has restor'd the Araucanian name,
 And rais'd it, sinking in the depths of shame,
 When alien lords our nation's spirit broke,
 And bent its neck beneath a servile yoke ?
 I am the Chief who burst our galling chain,
 And freed my country from oppressive Spain ;
 My name alone, without my sword's display,
 Humbles our foes, and fills them with dismay.
 These happy arms while thy dear beauties fill,
 I feel no terror, I foresee no ill.
 Be not by false and empty dreams deprest,
 Since truth has nothing to afflict thy breast.
 Oft have I 'scap'd, inur'd to every state,
 From many a darker precipice of fate ;
 Oft in far mightier perils risk'd my life,
 And issued glorious from the doubtful strife.
 With less'ning confidence, and deeper grief,
 Trembling she hung upon the soothing Chief,
 His lip with supplicating softness prest,
 And urg'd with many a tear this fond request :
 If the pure love, which, prodigal and free,
 When freedom most was mine, I gave to thee ;

If truth, which Heaven will witness and defend,
 Weigh with my sovereign lord and gentle friend ;
 By these let me adjure thee ; by the pain
 Which at our parting pierc'd my every vein,
 And all the vows, if undispers'd in air,
 Which then with many a tear I heard thee swear ;
 To this my only wish at least agree,
 If all thy wishes have been laws to me :
 Haste, I entreat thee, arm thyself with care,
 And bid thy soldiers for defence prepare.

The brave Barbarian quick reply'd—'Tis clear
 How low my powers are rated by thy fear.
 Canst thou so poorly of Lantaro deem ?
 And is this arm so sunk in thy esteem ?
 This arm, which, rescuing thy native earth,
 So prodigally prov'd its valiant worth !
 In my try'd courage how complete thy trust,
 Whose terror weeps thy living lord as dust !

In thee, she cries, with confidence most pure,
 My soul is satisfy'd, yet not secure.
 What will thy arm avail in danger's course,
 If my malignant fate has mightier force ?
 But let the mis'ry I forebode arise ;
 On this firm thought my constant love relies :
 The sword whose stroke our union may disjoin,
 Will teach my faithful soul to follow thine.
 Since my hard destiny, with rage severe,
 Thus threatens me with all that love can fear ;
 Since I am doom'd the worst of ills to see,
 And lose all earthly good in losing thee ;
 O ! suffer me to pass, ere death appears,
 The little remnant of my life in tears !
 The heart that sinks not in distress like this,
 Could never feel, could never merit bliss.

Here from her eyes such floods of sorrow flow.
 Compassion weeps in gazing on her woe !

NOTES TO THE

The fond Lantaro, tho' of firmest power,
 Sheds, as she speaks, a sympathetic shower.
 But, to the tender scenes of love unus'd,
 My artless pen, embarrass'd and confus'd,
 From its sad task with diffidence withdraws,
 And in its labour asks a little pause.

C A N T O XIV.

WHAT erring wretch, to Truth and Beauty blind,
 Shall dare to satirize the Female kind,
 Since pure affection prompts their anxious care,
 Their lovely weakness, and their fond despair ?
 This fair Barbarian, free from Christian ties,
 A noble proof of perfect love supplies,
 By kindest words, and floods of tears that roll
 From the clear source of her impassion'd soul.

The chearing ardor of the dauntless Chief
 Fails to afford her troubled mind relief ;
 Nor can the ample trench and guarded wall
 Preserve her doubtful heart from fear's enthrall :
 Her terrors, rushing with love's mighty force,
 Level whatever would impede their course.
 She finds no shelter from her cruel doom,
 Save the dear refuge of Lantaro's tomb.

Thus their two hearts, where equal passion reign'd ;
 A fond debate with tender strife maintain'd ;
 Their differing words alike their love display,
 Feed the sweet poison, and augment its sway.

The sleepy soldiers now their stories close,
 And stretch'd around their sinking fires repose.
 The path in front with centinels was lin'd,
 And the high mountain was their guard behind ;

But o'er that mountain, with advent'rous tread,
 Bold Villagran his silent forces led.
 His hasty march with painful toil he made ;
 Toil is the price that must for fame be paid.
 Now near the fort, and halting in its sight,
 He waits the coming aid of clearer light.
 The stars yet shining, but their fires decay,
 And now the reddening east proclaims the day.
 Th' advancing troop no Indian eye alarms,
 For friendly darkness hover'd o'er their arms ;
 And on the quarter where the mountain rose,
 The careless guard despis'd the thought of foes.
 No panting horse their still approach betray'd ;
 Propitious Fortune lent the Spaniards aid ;
 Fortune, who oft bids drowsy Sloth beware,
 And lulls to sleep the watchful eye of Care.

When Night's obscure dominion first declines,
 And glimmering light the dusky air refines,
 The weary guards, who round the wall were plac'd,
 Hail the new day, and from their station haste ;
 Secure of ill, no longer watch they keep,
 Quick to forget their nightly toils in sleep :
 Thro' all the fort there reign'd a calm profound ;
 In wine and slumber all its force was drown'd.

The Spanish Chief, who saw the fav'ring hour;
 Led on by slow degrees his silent power.
 No Indian eyes perceiv'd his near advance ;
 Fate seem'd to bind them in a cruel trance ;
 Each in sound slumber draws his easy breath,
 Nor feels his slumber will be clos'd by Death.
 So blind are mortals to that tyrant's sway,
 They deem him distant, while they sink his prey.

Our eager soldiers now no longer halt,
 While kind occasion prompts the keen assault ;
 A shout they raise, terrific, loud, and long,
 Swell'd by the voice of all the ardent throng ;

Whose

Whose ranks, obedient to their Leader's call,
Rush with light ardor o'er th' unguarded wall,
And gain the fort, where Sleep's oppressive weight
Expos'd his wretched victims, blind to fate.

As villains, conscious of their life impure,
Find in their guilty course no spot secure;
For vice is ever doom'd new fears to feel,
And tremble at each turn of Fortune's wheel;
At every noise, at each alarm that stirs,
Death's penal horror to their mind occurs;
Quick to their arms they fly with wild dismay,
And rush where hasty terror points the way:
So quick the Indians to the tumult came,
With sleep and valour struggling in their frame.
Unaw'd by danger's unexpected fight,
They rouse their fellows, and they rush to fight.
Tho' their brave bosoms are of armour bare,
Their manly hearts their martial rage declare.
No furious odds their gallant souls appall,
But resolute they fly to guard the wall.

It was the season when, with tender care,
Lantaro reason'd with his anxious Fair;
Carest, consol'd, and, in his anger kind,
Mildly reprov'd her weak mistrusting mind.
Spite of his cheering voice she trembles still;
Severer terrors now her bosom fill:
For sterner sounds their soft debate o'ercome,
Drown'd in the rattle of th' alarming drum.
But not so quick, on Apprehension's wings,
The wretched miser from his pillow springs,
Whose hoarded gold forbids his mind to rest,
If doubtful noise the nightly thief suggest:
Nor yet so hasty, tho' with terror wild,
Flies the fond mother to her wounded child,
Whose painful cry her shuddering soul alarms,
As flew Lantaro at the sound of arms.

His mantle rapidly around him roll'd,
And, grasping a light sword with hasty hold,
Too eager for his heavier arms to wait,
The fierce Barbarian hurried to the gate.
O faithless Fortune! thou deceitful friend!
Of thy false favours how severe the end!
How quick thou cancell'st, when thy frown appears,
Th' accumulated gifts of long triumphant years!

To aid the Spaniards in their bold emprise,
Four hundred Indians march'd, their firm allies,
Who on the left their line of battle close,
And haste to combat with their painted bows;
Launching adroitly, in their rapid course,
Unnumber'd arrows with unerring force.
As brave Lantaro issued from his tent,
A shaft to meet the falling Chief was sent;
Thro' his left side (ye valiant, mourn his lot!)
Flew the keen arrow, with such fury shot
It pierc'd his heart, the bravest and the best
That e'er was lodg'd within a human breast.
Proud of the stroke that laid such valor low,
Death seem'd to glory in th' important blow;
And, that no Mortal might his triumph claim,
In darkness hid the doubtful Archer's name.
Such force the keen resistless weapon found,
It stretch'd the mighty Chieftain on the ground,
And gave large outlet to his ardent blood,
That gush'd apace in a tumultuous flood.
From his sunk cheek its native colour fled;
His sightless eyes roll'd in his ghastly head;
His soul, that felt its glorious hopes o'erthrown,
Retir'd, indignant, to the world unknown.

• The noble savages, not dismayed by the death of their Leader, continue to defend the fort with great fury.

C A N T O XV.

THE Poet opens this canto with a lively panegyric on Love: he affirms that the greatest Poets have derived their glory from their vivid descriptions of this enchanting passion; and he laments that he is precluded by his subject from indulging his imagination in such scenes as are more likely to captivate a reader.

He seems to intend this as an apology (but I must own it is an unsatisfactory one) for deserting the fair Guacolda, whom he mentions no more. He proceeds to describe the sharp contest which the undaunted Indians still maintained in their fort:—they refuse quarter, which is offered them by the Spanish Leader, and all resolutely perish with the brave and beloved Lantaro. The Poet then resumes his account of the naval expedition from Peru to Chile; and concludes the canto with a spirited description of a storm, which attacked the vessels as they arrived in sight of the province to which they were steering.

C A N T O XVI.

THE storm abates. The Spaniards land, and fortify themselves on an island near the country of the Araucanians. The latter hold a council of war in the valley of Ongolmo. Caupolican, their General, proposes to attack the Spaniards in their new post. The elder Chieftains dissuade him from the design. A quarrel ensues between Tucapel and the aged Peteguelen:—they are appeased by a speech of the venerable Colocolo; by whose advice a spirited and adroit young Indian, named Millalanco, is dispatched, as a peaceful ambassador, to learn the situation and designs of the Spaniards. He embarks in a large galley with oars, and soon arrives at the island. He surveys the Spanish implements of war with astonishment, and is conducted to the tent of the General, Don Garcia.

C A N T O

C A N T O XVII.

THE Indian addresses the Spanish officers with a proposal of peace and amity. He is dismissed with presents. The Chieftains, on his return, pretend to relinquish hostilities; but prepare secretly for war. The Spaniards remain unmolested on the island during the stormy season. They send a select party of a hundred and thirty, including our Poet, to raise a fort on the continent: these execute their commission with infinite dispatch, and all the Spanish troops remove to this new post. The Araucanians are alarmed. An intrepid Youth, named Graciano, proposes to the Indian General, Caupolican, to storm the fort. The Indians advance near it, under shelter of the night. The Poet describes himself, at this juncture, as oppressed by the excessive labours of the day, and unable to pursue his poetical studies according to his nightly custom: the pen falls from his hand: he is seized with violent pains and tremblings: his strength and senses forsake him: but soon recovering from this infirmity, he enjoys a refreshing sleep. Bellona appears to him in a vision, and encourages him both as a soldier and a poet. She conducts him, through a delicious country, to the summit of a most lofty mountain; when, pointing to a spot below, she informs him it is St. Quintin, and that his countrymen, under the command of their sovereign Philip, are just marching to attack it: she adds, that her presence is necessary in the midst of that important scene; and leaves the Poet on the eminence to survey and record the battle.

C A N T O XVIII.

AFTER the Poet has described the success of his royal master at St. Quintin, a female figure of a most venerable appearance, but without a name, relates to him prophetically many future events of great importance to his country. She touches on the disturbances in the

Netherlands, the enterprizes of the Turks, and the exploits of Don John of Austria, at that time unknown to fame. These she hints very imperfectly, telling the Poet, that if he wishes for farther information, he must follow the steps of a tame deer, which he will find in a particular spot; this animal will lead him to the cell of an ancient hermit, formerly a soldier, who will conduct him to the secret cave of the unsofial Piton, a mighty magician, who will display to him the most miraculous visions. His female Instructor then advises him to mix softer subjects with the horrors of war, and to turn his eyes and his thoughts to the charms of the many Beauties who then flourished in Spain. He beholds all these lovely fair ones assembled in a delicious paradise; and he is particularly attracted by a young lady, whose name he discovers to be Donna Maria Bazan (his future wife): in the moment that he begins to question his Guide concerning this engaging Beauty, he is roused from his vision by the sound of an alarm. He snatches up his arms, and hurries to his post:—while the morning dawns, and the Indians begin to attack the fort.

C A N T O XIX.

THE Indians advance in three squadrons. The Youth Gracolino o'erleaps the trench, supported on a lofty pike, by which he also passes the wall. He defends himself in the midst of the Spaniards with great spirit; but, finding himself unsupported, he wrenches a lance from a Spanish soldier, and tries to leap once more over the trench; but he is struck by a stone while vaulting through the air, and falls, covered, as the Poet expressly declares, with two-and-thirty wounds. Some of his friends are shot near him; but the Indians get possession of the Spanish lance with which he had sprung over the wall, and brandish it in triumph. The Spaniard, named Elvira, who had lost his weapon, piqued by the adventure, sallies from the fort, and returns, amid the shouts of his countrymen, with an Indian spear which he won in single combat from a Barbarian, whom he had perceived detached from his party.

party. The Indians attempt to storm the fort on every side : many are destroyed by the Spanish fire-arms. The head of the ancient Peteguelen is shot off ; but Tucapel passes the wall, and rushes with great slaughter into the midst of the enemy. The Spaniards who were in the ships that anchored near the coast hasten on shore, and march to assist their countrymen in the fort, but are attacked by a party of Indians in their march. The conflict continues furious on the walls ; but the Indians at length retreat, leaving Tucapel still fighting within the fort.

C A N T O XX.

TUCAPEL, though severely wounded, escapes with life, and rejoins the Indian army, which continues to retreat. The Spaniards sally from the fort, but soon return to it, from the apprehension of an ambuscade. They clear their trench, and strengthen the weaker parts of their fortification. Night comes on. The Poet describes himself stationed on a little eminence in the plain below the fort, which was seated on high and rocky ground :—fatigued with the toils of the day, and oppressed by the weight of his armour, which he continues to wear, he is troubled with a lethargic heaviness ; which he counteracts by exercise, declaring that his disposition to slumber in his post arose not from any intemperance either in diet or in wine, as mouldy biscuit and rain-water had been for some time his chief sustenance ; and that he was accustomed to make the moist earth his bed, and to divide his time between his poetical and his military labours. He then relates the following nocturnal adventure, which may perhaps be considered as the most striking and pathetic incident in this singular poem :

While thus I strove my nightly watch to keep,
And struggled with th' oppressive weight of sleep,
As my quick feet, with many a silent stride,
Travers'd th' allotted ground from side to side,
My eye perceiv'd one quarter of the plain
White with the mingled bodies of the slain ;

For our incessant fire, that bloody day,
Had slaughter'd numbers in the stubborn fray.

As oft I paus'd each distant noise to hear,
Gazing around me with attentive ear,
I heard from time to time a feeble sound
Towards the breathless Indians on the ground,
Still closing with a sigh of mournful length ;
At every interval it gather'd strength ;
And now it ceas'd, and now again begun,
And still from corse to corse it seem'd to run.
As night's encreasing shade my hope destroys,
To view the source of this uncertain noise,
Eager my mind's unquiet doubts to still,
And more the duties of my post fulfil,
With crouching steps I haste, and earnest eyes,
To the low spot from whence the murmurs rise ;
And see a dusky Form, that seems to tread
Slow, on four feet, among the gory dead.

With terror, that my heart will not deny,
When this strange vision struck my doubtful eye,
Towards it, with a prayer to Heav'n, I prest,
Arms in my hand, my corselet on my breast ;
But now the dusky Form, on which I sprung,
Upright arose, and spoke with plaintive tongue :

Mercy ! to mercy hear my just pretence ;
I am a woman, guiltless of offence !
If my distress, and unexampled plight,
No generous pity in thy breast excite ;
If thy blood-thirsty rage, by tears uncheck'd,
Would pass those limits which the brave respect ;
Will such a deed encrease thy martial fame,
When Heaven's just voice shall to the world proclaim,
That by thy ruthless sword a woman died,
A widow, sunk in sorrow's deepest tide ?
Yet I implore thee, if 'twas haply thine,
Or for thy curse, as now I feel it mine ;

If e'er thy lot, in any state, to prove
How firm the faithful ties of tender love,
O let me bury one brave warrior slain,
Whose corse lies blended with this breathless train !
Remember, he who thwarts the duteous will
Becomes th' approver and the cause of ill.

Thou wilt not hinder these my pious vows ;
War, fiercest war, this just demand allows :
The basest tyranny alone is driven
To use the utmost power that chance has given.
Let but my soul its dear companion find,
Then fate thy fury, if to blood inclin'd ;
For in such grief I draw my lingering breath,
Life is my dread, beyond the pangs of death.
There is no ill that now can wound my breast,
No good, but what I in my Love possess :
Fly then, ye hours ! that keep me from the dead ;
For he, the spirit of my life, is fled.
If adverse Heaven my latest wish deny,
On his dear corse to fix my closing eye,
My tortur'd soul, in cruel Fate's despight,
Will soar, the faithful partner of his flight.

And now her agony of heart implor'd
An end of all her sorrows from my sword.
Doubt and distrust my troubled mind assail,
That fears deceit in her affecting tale ;
Nor was I fully of her faith secure,
Till oft her words the mournful truth insure ;
Suspicion whisper'd, that an artful spy
By this illusion might our state descry.

Howe'er inclin'd to doubt, yet soon I knew,
Though night conceal'd her features from my view,
That truth was stamp'd on every word she said ;
So full of grief, so free from guilty dread :
And that bold love, to every danger blind,
Had sent her forth her slaughter'd Lord to find,

Who,

Who, in the onset of our bloody strife,
For brave distinction sacrific'd his life.

Fill'd with compassion, when I saw her bent
To execute her chaste and fond intent,
I led her weeping to the higher spot,
To guard whose precincts was that night my lot;
Securely there I begg'd her to relate
The perfect story of her various fate;
From first to last her touching woes impart,
And by the tale relieve her loaded heart.

Ah! she replied, relief I ne'er can know,
Till Death's kind aid shall terminate my woe!
Earth for my ills no remedy supplies,
Beyond all suff'rance my afflictions rise:
Yet, though the task will agonize my soul,
Of my sad story I will tell the whole;
Grief, thus inforc'd, my life's weak thread may rend,
And in the killing tale my pangs may end.

The fair Indian then relates to Ercilla the particulars of her life, in a speech of considerable length:—she informs him, that her name is Te-gualda;—that she is the daughter of the Chieftain Brancól;—that her father had often pressed her to marry, which she had for some time declined, though solicited by many of the noblest Youths in her country; till, being appointed, in compliment to her beauty, to distribute the prizes, in a scene of public festivity, to those who excelled in the manly exercises, she was struck by the accomplishments of a gallant Youth, named Crepino, as she bestowed on him the reward of his victories;—that she declared her choice to her father, after perceiving the Youth inspired with a mutual affection for her;—that the old Chieftain was delighted by her chusing so noble a character, and their marriage had been publicly solemnized but a month from that day. On this conclusion of her story, she bursts into new agonies of grief, and intreats Ercilla to let her pay her last duties to her husband; or rather, to unite them again in a common grave. Ercilla endeavours to console her, by repeated promises of all the assistance in his power. In the most passionate excess of sorrow, she

she still entreats him to end her miserable life.—In this distressing scene, our Author is relieved by the arrival of a brother officer, who had been also stationed on the plain, and now informs Ercilla that the time of their appointed watch is expired. They join in comforting the unhappy Mourner, and conduct her into the fort ; where they consign her, for the remainder of the night, to *the decent care of married women*, to use the chaste expression of the generous and compassionate Ercilla.

C A N T O XXI.

I N pure affection who has soar'd above
 The tender pious proof of faithful love,
 Which thus awak'd our sympathetic care
 For this unhappy, fond, barbarian Fair?
 O that just Fame my humble voice would raise
 To swell in loudest notes her lasting praise!
 To spread her merits, in immortal rhyme,
 Through every language, and through every clime!
 With pitying females she the night remain'd,
 Where no rude step their privacy profan'd;
 Though wretched, thankful for their soothing aid,
 With hopes her duty would at length be paid.
 Soon as the welcome light of morning came,
 Though soundest sleep had seiz'd my jaded frame,
 Though my tir'd limbs were still to rest inclin'd,
 Solitude awak'd my anxious mind.
 Quick to my Indian Mourner I repair,
 And still in tears I find the restless Fair;
 The varying hours afford her no relief,
 No transient momentary pause of grief.
 With truest pity I her pangs assuage;
 To find her slaughter'd Lord my word engage;
 Restore his corse, and, with a martial band,
 Escort her safely to her native land.

With

With blended doubt and sorrow, weeping still,
My promis'd word she pray'd me to fulfil.

Asssembling now a menial Indian train,
I led her to explore the bloody plain :
Where heaps of mingled dead deform'd the ground,
Near to the fort the breathless Chief we found ;
Clay-cold and stiff, the gory earth he prest,
A fatal ball had pass'd his manly breast.

Wretched Tegualda, who before her view'd
The pale disfigur'd form, in blood imbru'd,
Sprung forward, and with instantaneous force
Frantic she darted on the precious corse,
And press'd his lips, where livid death appears,
And bath'd his wounded bosom in her tears,
And kiss'd the wound, and the wild hope pursues
That her fond breath may yet new life infuse.

Wretch that I am ! at length she madly cried,
Why does my soul these agonies abide ?
Why do I linger in this mortal strife,
Nor pay to Love his just demand, my life ?
Why, poor of spirit ! at a single blow
Do I not close this bitter scene of woe ?
Whence this delay ? will Heaven to me deny
The wretch's choice and privilege, to die ?

While, bent on death, in this despair she gasp'd,
Her furious hands her snowy neck inclasp'd ;
Failing her frantic wish, they do not spare
Her mournful visage nor her flowing hair.
Much as I strove to stop her mad intent,
Her fatal purpose I could scarce prevent :
So loath'd she life, and with such fierce controul
The raging thirst of death inflam'd her soul.

When by my prayers, and soft persuasion's balm,
Her pangs of sorrow grew a little calm,
And her mild speech confirm'd my hope, at last,
That her delirious agony was past,

My ready Indian train, with duteous haste,
 On a firm bier the clay-cold body plac'd,
 And bore the Warrior, in whose fate we griev'd,
 To where her vassals the dear charge receiv'd.
 But, left from ruthless War's outrageous sway
 The mourning Fair might suffer on her way,
 O'er the near mountains, to a safer land,
 I march'd to guard her with my warlike band,
 And there secure, for the remaining road
 Was clear and open to her own abode,
 She gratefully declin'd my farther care,
 And thank'd and blest'd me in a parting prayer.

As I have been tempted to dwell much longer than I intended on some of the most pathetic incidents of this extraordinary poem, I shall give a more concise summary of the remaining cantos.—On Ercilla's return, the Spaniards continue to strengthen their fort. They receive intelligence from an Indian ally, that the Barbarian army intend a fresh assault in the night. They are relieved from this alarm by the arrival of a large reinforcement from the Spanish cities in Chile:—on which event Colocolo prevails on the Indians to suspend the attack. Caupolican, the Indian General, reviews all his forces; and the various Chiefs are well described. The Spanish Commander, Don Garcia, being now determined to march into the hostile district of Arauco, addresses his soldiers in a spirited harangue, requesting them to remember the pious cause for which they fight, and to spare the life of every Indian who is disposed to submission. They remove from their post, and pass in boats over the broad river Biohio.

C A N T O XXII.

THE Spaniards are attacked in their new quarters — a furious battle ensues. The Spaniards are forced to give ground, but at last prevail. The Indian Chief, Rengo, signalizes himself in the action; defends himself in a marsh, and retreats in good order with his forces.

The Spaniards, after the conflict, seize an unhappy straggling Youth, named Galvarino, whom they punish as a rebel in the most barbarous manner, by cutting off both his hands. The valiant Youth defies their cruelty in the midst of this horrid scene; and, brandishing his bloody stumps, departs from his oppressors with the most insulting menaces of revenge.

C A N T O XXIII.

GALVARINO appears in the Assembly of the Indian Chieftains, and excites them, in a very animated speech, to revenge the barbarity with which he has been treated. He faints from loss of blood, in the close of his harangue, but is recovered by the care of his friends, and restored to health. The Indians, exasperated by the sight of his wounds, unanimously determine to prosecute the war. The Spaniards, advancing in Arauco, send forth scouts to discover the disposition of the neighbouring tribes. Ercilla, engaging in this service, perceives an old Indian in a sequestered spot, apparently sinking under the infirmities of age; but, on his approach, the ancient figure flies from him with astonishing rapidity. He endeavours in vain, though on horseback, to overtake this aged fugitive, who soon escapes from his sight. He now discovers the tame Deer foretold in his vision; and, pursuing it, is conducted through intricate paths to a retired cottage, where a courteous old man receives him in a friendly manner. Ercilla enquires after the Magician Fiton: the old man undertakes to guide him to the secret mansion of that wonderful Necromancer, to whom he declares himself related. He adds, that he himself was once a distinguished warrior; but, having the misfortune to sully his past glory, without losing his life, in a conflict with another Chieftain, he had withdrawn himself from society, and lived twenty years as a hermit. He now leads Ercilla through a gloomy grove to the cell of the Magician, whose residence and magical apparatus are described with great force of imagination. Fiton appears from a secret portal, and proves to be the aged figure who had escaped so swiftly from the sight of Ercilla. At the request of
his

his relation, the old Warrior, he condescends to shew Ercilla the wonders of his art. He leads him to a large lucid globe, self-suspended in the middle of an immense apartment. He tells him it is the work of forty years study, and contains an exact representation of the world, with this singular power, that it exhibits, at his command, any scene of futurity which he wishes to behold:—that, knowing the heroic composition of Ercilla, he will give him an opportunity to vary and embellish his poem by the description of a most important sea-fight, which he will display to him most distinctly on that sphere. He then invokes all the powers of the infernal world. Ercilla fixes his eye on the globe, and perceives the naval forces of Spain, with those of the Pope and the Venetians, prepared to engage the great armament of the Turks.

C A N T O XXIV.

DESCRIBES circumstantially the naval battle of Lepanto, and celebrates the Spanish admiral, Don John of Austria. Ercilla gazes with great delight on this glorious action, and beholds the complete triumph of his countrymen; when the Magician strikes the globe with his wand, and turns the scene into darkness. Ercilla, after being entertained with other marvellous sights, which he omits from his dread of prolixity, takes leave of his two aged friends, and regains his quarters. The Spaniards continue to advance: on their pitching their camp in a new spot, towards evening, an Araucanian, fantastically drest in armour, enquires for the tent of Don Garcia, and is conducted to his presence.

C A N T O XXV.

THE Araucanian delivers a defiance to Don Garcia, in the name of Caupolican, who challenges the Spanish General to end the war by a single combat. The messenger adds, that the whole Indian army will descend into the plain, on the next morning, to be spectators of the

duel. Don Garcia dismisses him with an acceptance of the challenge. At the dawn of day the Indian forces appear in three divisions. A party of Spanish horse precipitately attack their left wing, before which Caupolican was advancing. They are repulsed. A general and obstinate engagement ensues. The mangled Galvarino appears at the head of one Indian squadron, and excites his countrymen to revenge his wrongs. Many Spaniards are named who distinguish themselves in the battle. Among the Indian Chiefs Tucapel and Rengo display the most splendid acts of valour; and, though personal enemies, they mutually defend each other. Caupolican also, at the head of the left squadron, obliges the Spaniards to retreat; and the Araucanians are on the point of gaining a decisive victory, when the fortune of the day begins to turn.

C A N T O XXVI.

THE reserved guard of the Spaniards, in which Ercilla was stationed, advancing to the charge, recover the field, and oblige the main body of the Indians to fly. Caupolican, though victorious in his quarter, sounds a retreat when he perceives this event. The Indians fly in great disorder. Rengo for some time sustains an unequal conflict, and at last retreats suddenly into a wood, where he collects several of the scattered fugitives. As Ercilla happened to advance towards this spot, a Spaniard, called Remon, exhorts him by name to attempt the dangerous but important exploit of forcing this Indian party from the wood. His honour being thus piqued, he rushes forward with a few followers, and, after an obstinate engagement, in which many of the Indians are cut to pieces, the Spaniards obtain the victory, and return to their camp with several prisoners. After this great defeat of the Indian army, the Spaniards, to deter their enemies from all future resistance, barbarously resolve to execute twelve Chieftains of distinction, whom they find among their captives, and to leave their bodies exposed on the trees that surrounded the field of battle. The generous Ercilla, lamenting this inhuman sentence, intercedes particularly for the life of one, alledging
 5 that

that he had seen him united with the Spaniards. This person proves to be Galvarino; who, on hearing the intercession for his life, produces his mangled arms, which he had concealed in his bosom, and, giving vent to his detestation of the Spaniards, insists on dying with his countrymen. Ercilla persists in vain in his endeavour to save him. As no executioner could be found among the Spanish soldiers, a new mode of destruction, says our Poet, was invented; and every Indian was ordered to terminate his own life by a cord which was given him. These brave men hastened to accomplish their fate with as much alacrity, continues Ercilla, as the most spirited warrior marches to an attack. One alone of the twelve begins to hesitate, and pray for mercy; declaring himself the lineal descendant of the most ancient race and sovereign of the country. He is interrupted by the reproaches of the impetuous Galvarino, and, repenting his timidity, atones for it by instant death.

The Spaniards advance still farther in the country, and raise a fort where Valdivia had perished. Ercilla finds his old friend the Magician once more, who tells him that Heaven thought proper to punish the pride of the Araucanians by their late defeat; but that the Spaniards would soon pay dearly for their present triumph. The Wizard retires after this prophecy, and, with much intreaty, allows Ercilla to follow him. Coming to a gloomy rock, he strikes it with his wand; a secret door opens, and they enter into a delicious garden, which the Poet commends for its symmetry, expressly declaring that every hedge *has its brother*. The Magician leads him into a vault of alabaster; and, perceiving his wish, though he does not express it, of seeing the miraculous globe again, the courteous Fiton conducts him to it.

C A N T O XXVII.

THE Magician displays to our Poet the various countries of the globe; particularly pointing out to him the ancient castle of Ercilla, the seat of his ancestors in Biscay, and the spot where his sovereign Philip the Second was soon to build his magnificent palace, the Escorial. Having shewn him the various nations of the earth on his marvellous sphere, Fiton conducts his guest to the road leading to the
Spanish

Spanish camp, where the soldiers of Ercilla were seeking their officer. The Spaniards in vain attempt to sooth and to terrify the Araucanians into peace; and, finding the importance of their present post, they determine to strengthen it. Ercilla proceeds with a party to the city of Imperial, to provide necessaries for this purpose. On his return, as he is marching through the country of some pacific Indians, he discovers, at the close of day, a distressed female, who attempts to fly, but is overtaken by Ercilla.

C A N T O XXVIII.

THE fair fugitive, whom our Poet describes as singularly beautiful, relates her story. She tells him her name is Glaura, the daughter of an opulent Chieftain, with whom she lived most happily, till a brother of her father's, who frequently resided with him, persecuted her with an unwarrantable passion;—that she in vain represented to him the impious nature of his love;—he persisted in his frantic attachment, and, on the appearance of a hostile party of Spaniards, rushed forth to die in her defence, intreating her to receive his departing spirit. He fell in the action; her father shared the same fate: she herself escaped at a postern gate into the woods. Two negroes, laden with spoil, discovered, and seized her. Her cries brought a young Indian, named Cariolano, to her rescue: he shot an arrow into the heart of the first ruffian, and stabbed the second. Glaura expressed her gratitude by receiving her young deliverer as her husband. Before they could regain a place of safety, they were alarmed by the approach of Spaniards. The generous Youth intreated Glaura to conceal herself in a tree, while he ventured to meet the enemy. In her terror she submitted to this expedient, which, on recovery from her panic, she bitterly repented; for when she issued from her retreat, she sought in vain for Cariolano, and supposed, from the clamour she had heard, that he must have perished. She continued to wander in this wretched state of mind, still unable to hear any tidings of her protector. While the fair Indian thus closes her narrative, Ercilla is alarmed by the approach of a large party of Barbarians. One of his faithful Indian attendants, whom he had lately attached to him,

intreats him to escape with the utmost haste ; adding, that he can save him from pursuit by his knowledge of the country ; and that he will risque his own life most willingly, to preserve that of Ercilla. Glaura bursts into an agony of joy, in discovering her lost Cariolano in this faithful attendant. Ercilla exclaims, “ Adieu, my friends ; I give you “ both your liberty, which is all I have at present to bestow,” and rejoins his little troop. Before he enters on the account of what followed, he relates the circumstance by which he attached Cariolano to his service ; whom he had found alone, as he himself was marching with a small party, and a few prisoners that he had taken. The Youth at first defended himself, and shot two Spaniards with his arrows, and continued to resist the numbers that pressed upon him, with his mantle and his dagger evading their blows by his extreme agility, and wounding several. Ercilla generously rushed in to his rescue, and declared he deserved a reward for his uncommon bravery, instead of being destroyed so unfairly. The Youth, in consequence of this treatment, flung down his dagger, and became the affectionate attendant of Ercilla. Our Poet, after relating this incident, returns to the scene where his party was surprized in a hollow road, and severely galled by the enemy, who attacked them with showers of stones from the higher ground. Ercilla forces his way up the precipice, and, after dispersing part of the Indian force, effects his escape with a few followers ; but all are wounded, and obliged to leave their baggage in the possession of their numerous enemies.

C A N T O XXIX.

OPENS with an encomium on the love of our country, and the signal proofs of this virtue which the Araucanians displayed ; who, notwithstanding their loss of four great battles in the space of three months, still continue firm in their resolution of defending their liberty. Caupolican proposes, in a public assembly, to set fire to their own habitations, and leave themselves no alternative, but that of killing or being killed. The Chieftains all agree in this desperate determination. Tucapel,

capel, before they proceed to action against the Spaniards, insists on terminating his difference with Rengo, a rival Chieftain, by a single combat. A plain is appointed for this purpose: all the people of Arauco assemble as spectators: the Chiefs appear in complete armour, and engage in a most obstinate and bloody conflict.

C A N T O XXX.

AFTER many dreadful wounds on each side, the two Chieftains, closing with each other, fall together, and, after a fruitless struggle for victory, remain speechless on the ground. Caupolican, who presided as judge of the combat, descends from his seat, and, finding some signs of life in each, orders them to be carried to their respective tents. They recover, and are reconciled. The Spaniards, leaving a garrison in their new fort, under a captain named Reynoso, had proceeded to the city of Imperial. Caupolican endeavours to take advantage of this event. He employs an artful Indian, named Pran, to examine the state of the fort. Pran insinuates himself among the Indian servants belonging to the Spaniards. He views the fort, and endeavours to persuade a servile Indian, named Andresillo, to admit Caupolican and his forces while the Spaniards are sleeping. Andresillo promises to meet Caupolican in secret, and converse with him on this project.

C A N T O XXXI.

OPENS with a spirited invective against treachery in war, and particularly those traitors who betray their country. Andresillo reveals all that had passed to his Spanish captain; who promises him a great reward if he will assist in making the stratagem of the Indians an instrument of destruction to those who contrived it. They concert a plan for this purpose. Andresillo meets Caupolican in secret, and promises to introduce

introduce the Indian forces into the fort when the Spaniards are sleeping, in the heat of the day. Pran is sent forward, to learn from Andresillo if all things are quiet, just before the hour appointed for the assault. He examines the state of the fort, and, finding the Spaniards apparently unprepared for defence, hastens back to the Indian General, who advances by a quick and silent march. The Spaniards in the interim point all their guns, and prepare for the most bloody resistance.

C A N T O XXXII.

AFTER a panegyric on clemency, and a noble censure of those enormous cruelties, by which his countrymen sullied their military fame, the Poet relates the dreadful carnage which ensued as the Indians approached the fort. The Spaniards, after destroying numbers by their artillery, send forth a party of horse, who cut the fugitives to pieces. They inhumanly murder thirteen of their most distinguished prisoners, by blowing them from the mouths of cannon: but none of the confederate Chieftains, whom the Poet has particularly celebrated, were included in this number; for those high-spirited Barbarians had refused to attend Caupolican in this assault, as they considered it as disgraceful to attack their enemies by surprize. The unfortunate Indian Leader, seeing his forces thus unexpectedly massacred, escapes with ten faithful followers, and wanders through the country in the most calamitous condition. The Spaniards endeavour, by all the means they can devise, to discover his retreat: the faithful inhabitants of Arauco refuse to betray him.

Ercilla, in searching the country with a small party, finds a young wounded female. She informs him, that marching with her husband, she had the misfortune of seeing him perish in the late slaughter;—that a friendly soldier, in pity to her extreme distress, had tried to end her miserable life in the midst of the confusion, but had failed in his generous design, by giving her an ineffectual wound;—that she had been removed from the field of battle to that sequestered spot, where she lan-

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guished in the hourly hope of death, which she now implores from the hand of Ercilla. Our Poet consoles her; dresses her wound, and leaves one of his attendants to protect her. On his return to the fort, he discourses to his soldiers in praise of the fidelity and spirit displayed by the Indian females, comparing them to the chaste and constant Dido. A young soldier of his train expresses his surprize on hearing Ercilla commend the Carthaginian Queen for a virtue to which, he conceived, she had no pretence. From hence our Poet takes occasion to vindicate the injured Eliza from the slanderous misrepresentation of Virgil; and flatters himself that the love of justice, so natural to man, will induce every reader to listen with pleasure to his defence of the calumniated Queen. He then enters on her *real history*, and relates circumstantially her lamentation over the murdered Sichæus, and the artifice by which she escaped with her treasures from her inhuman brother Pygmalion:—she engages many of his attendants to share the chances of her voyage; and, having collected a supply of females from the island of Cyprus, she directs her course to the coast of Africa.

C A N T O XXXIII.

DIDO, as our Poet continues her *more authentic story*, purchases her dominion and raises her flourishing city. The ambassadors of Iarbas arrive at Carthage, to offer this celebrated Queen the alternative of marriage or war. The Senate, who are first informed of the proposal, being fearful that the chaste resolutions of their fair Sovereign may ruin their country, attempt to engage her, by a singular device, to accept the hand of Iarbas. They tell her, that this haughty Monarch has sent to demand twenty of her privy counsellors to regulate his kingdom; and that, in consideration of their age and infirmities, they must decline so unpleasant a service. The Queen represents to them the danger of their refusal, and the duty which they owe to their country; declaring, that she would most readily sacrifice her own life for the safety or advantage of her subjects. The Senators then reveal to her the real demand

demand of Iarbas, and urge the necessity of her marriage for the preservation of the state. The faithful Dido knows not what to resolve, and demands three months to consider of this delicate and important point:—at the close of that period, she assembles her subjects; and, taking leave of them in a very affectionate harangue, declares her resolution to die, as the only means by which she can at once satisfy both Heaven and earth, by discharging her duty to her people, and at the same time preserving her faith inviolate to her departed Sichæus. Invoking his name, she plunges a poniard in her breast; and throws herself on a flaming pile, which had been kindled for a different sacrifice. Her grateful subjects lament her death, and pay divine honours to her memory. “ This * (says our Poet) is the true and genuine story of the famous defamed Dido, whose most honoured chastity has been belied by the inconsiderate Virgil, to embellish his poetical fictions.”

Our Poet returns from this digression on Dido, to the fate of the Indian Leader Caupolican.—One of the prisoners, whom the Spaniards had taken in their search after this unfortunate Chief, is at last tempted by bribes to betray his General. He conducts the Spaniards to a spot near the sequestered retreat of Caupolican, and directs them how to discover it; but refuses to advance with them, overcome by his dread of the Hero whom he is tempted to betray. The Spaniards surround the house in which the Chieftain had taken refuge with his ten faithful associates. Alarmed by a centinel, he prepares for defence; but being soon wounded in the arm, surrenders, endeavouring to conceal his high character, and to make the Spaniards believe him an ordinary soldier.

With their accustom'd shouts, and greedy toil,
Our furious troops now riot in their spoil ;

* Este es el cierto y verdadero cuento,
De la famosa Dido disfamada
Que Virgilio Maron sin miramiento
Falsó su historia y castidad preciada
Por dar a sus ficciones ornamento
Pues vemos que esta Reyna importunada
Pudiéndose casar y no quemarse
Antes quemarse quiso, que casarse.

Through the lone village their quick rapine spread,
 Nor leave unpillag'd e'en a single shed :
 When, from a tent, that, plac'd on safer ground,
 The neighbouring hill's uncultur'd summit crown'd,
 A woman rush'd, who, in her hasty flight,
 Ran through the roughest paths along the rocky height.
 A Negro of our train, who mark'd her way,
 Soon made the hapless fugitive his prey ;
 For thwarting crags her doubtful steps impede,
 And the fair form was ill prepar'd for speed ;
 For at her breast she bore her huddled son ;
 To fifteen months the infant's life had run :
 From our brave captive sprung the blooming boy,
 Of both his parents the chief pride and joy.
 The Negro carelessly his victim brought,
 Nor knew th' important prize his haste had caught.

Our soldiers now, to catch the cooling tide,
 Had sallied to the murmuring river's side :
 When the unhappy Wife beheld her Lord,
 His strong arms bound with a disgraceful cord,
 Stript of each ensign of his past command,
 And led the pris'ner of our shouting band ;
 Her anguish burst not into vain complaint,
 No female terrors her firm soul attain ;
 But, breathing fierce disdain, and anger wild,
 Thus she exclaim'd, advancing with her child :

The stronger arm that in this shameful band
 Has tied thy weak effeminated hand,
 Had nobler pity to thy state express'd
 If it had bravely pierc'd that coward breast.
 Wert thou the warrior whose heroic worth
 So swiftly flew around the spacious earth,
 Whose name alone, unaided by thy arm,
 Shook the remotest clime with fear's alarm ?
 Wert thou the victor whose triumphant strain
 Promis'd with rapid sword to vanquish Spain ;

To make new realms Arauco's power reverse,
And spread her empire o'er the Arctic sphere?
Wretch that I am! how was my heart deceiv'd,
In all the noble pride with which it heav'd,
When through the world my boasted title ran,
Trefia, the wife of great Caupolican!
Now, plung'd in misery from the heights of fame,
My glories end in this detested shame,
To see thee captive in a lonely spot,
When death and honour might have been thy lot!

What now avail thy scenes of happier strife,
So dearly bought by many a nobler life;
The wondrous feats, that valour scarce believ'd,
By thee with hazard and with toil atchiev'd?
Where are the vaunted fruits of thy command,
The laurels gather'd by this fetter'd hand?
All sunk! all turn'd to this abhorr'd disgrace,
To live the slave of this ignoble race!
Say, had thy soul no strength, thy hand no lance,
To triumph o'er the fickle pow'r of chance?
Dost thou not know, that, to the Warrior's name,
A gallant exit gives immortal fame?

Behold the burthen which my breast contains,
Since of thy love no other pledge remains!
Hadst thou in glory's arms resign'd thy breath,
We both had follow'd thee in joyous death:
Take, take thy son! he was a tie most dear,
Which spotless love once made my heart reverse;
Take him!—by generous pain, and wounded pride,
The currents of this fruitful breast are dried:
Rear him thyself, for thy gigantic frame,
To woman turn'd, a woman's charge may claim;
A mother's title I no more desire,
Or shameful children from a shameful fire!

As thus she spoke, with growing madness stung,
The tender nursing from her arms she flung

With

With savage fury, haſt'ning from our ſight,
 While anguiſh ſeem'd to aid her rapid flight.
 Vain were our efforts; our indignant cries,
 Nor gentle prayers, nor angry threats, ſuffice
 To make her breaſt, where cruel frenzy burn'd,
 Receive the little innocent ſhe ſpurn'd.

The Spaniards, after providing a nurſe for this unfortunate child, return with their priſoner Caupolican to their fort, which they enter in triumph.

The Indian General, perceiving that all attempts to conceal his quality are ineffectual, deſires a conference with the Spaniſh Captain Reynoſo.

C A N T O XXXIV.

CAUPOLICAN entreats Reynoſo to grant his life, but without any ſigns of terror. He affirms it will be the only method of appeaſing the ſanguinary hatred by which the contending nations are inflamed; and he offers, from his great influence over his country, to introduce the Chriſtian worſhip, and to bring the Araucanians to conſider themſelves as the ſubjects of the Spaniſh Monarch. His propoſals are rejected, and he is ſentenced to be impaled, and ſhot to death with arrows. He is unappall'd by this decree; but firſt deſires to be publicly baptized: after which ceremony, he is inhumanly led in chains to a ſcaffold. He diſplays a calm contempt of death; but, on ſeeing a wretched Negro appointed his executioner, his indignation burſts forth, and he hurls the Negro from the ſcaffold, entreating to die by a more honourable hand. His horrid ſentence is however executed. He ſupports the agonies of the ſtake with patient intrepidity, till a choſen band of archers put a period to his life.

Our brave Ercilla expreſſes his abhorrence of this atrocious ſcene; and adds, that if he had been preſent, this cruel execution ſhould not have taken place.

The conſequence of it was ſuch as Caupolican foretold:—the Araucanians determine to revenge his death, and aſſemble to elect a new General.

neral. The Poet makes an abrupt transition from their debate, to relate the adventures of Don Garcia, with whom he was himself marching to explore new regions. The inhabitants of the districts they invade, alarmed at the approach of the Spaniards, consult on the occasion. An Indian, named Tunconabala, who had served under the Araucanians, addresses the assembly, and recommends to them a mode of eluding the supposed avaricious designs of the Spaniards, by sending messengers to them, who should assume an appearance of extreme poverty, and represent their country as barren, and thus induce the invaders to turn their arms towards a different quarter. He offers to engage in this service himself. The Indians adopt the project he recommends, and remove their valuable effects to the interior parts of their country.

C A N T O XXXV.

DON GARCIA being arrived at the boundaries of Chile, which no Spaniard had passed, encourages his soldiers, in a spirited harangue, to the acquisition of the new provinces which lay before them. They enter a rude and rocky country, in which they are exposed to many hazards by their deceitful guides. Tunconabala meets them, as he had projected, with the appearance of extreme poverty; and, after many assurances of the sterility of that region, advises them to return, or to advance by a different path, which he represents to them as dangerous, but the only practicable road. On finding them resolved to press forward, he supplies them with a guide. They advance, with great toil and danger. Their guide escapes from them. They continue their march, through various hardships, in a desolate region. They at length discover a fertile plain, and a large lake with many little inhabited islands. As they approach the lake, a large gondola, with twelve oars, advances to meet them: the party it contained leap ashore, and salute the Spaniards with expressions of amity.

C A N T O XXXVI.

THE young Chieftain of the gondola supplies the Spaniards with provisions, refusing to accept any reward : and our Poet celebrates all the inhabitants of this region, for their amiable simplicity of manners. He visits one of the principal islands, where he is kindly entertained. He discovers that the lake had a communication with the sea, by a very rough and dangerous channel : this circumstance obliges the Spaniards, though reluctant, to return. They lament the necessity of passing again through the hardships of their former road. A young Indian undertakes to conduct them by an easier way. But our adventurous Ercilla, before the little army set forth on their return, engages ten chosen associates to embark with him in a small vessel, and pass the dangerous channel. He lands on a wild and sandy spot, and, advancing half a mile up the country, engraves a stanza, to record this adventure, on the bark of a tree. He repasses the channel, and rejoins the Spanish troops ; who, after much difficulty, reach the city of Imperial. Our Poet then touches on some particulars of his personal history, which I mention in the slight sketch of his life. He afterwards promises his reader to relate the issue of the debate among the Araucanian Chieftains, on the election of their new General ; but, recollecting in the instant that Spain herself is in arms, he entreats the favour of his Sovereign to inspire him with new spirit, that he may devote himself to that higher and more interesting subject.

C A N T O XXXVII.

OUR Poet, in this his last canto, seems to begin a new work. He enters into a discussion of Philip's right to the dominion of Portugal, and his acquisition of that kingdom ; when, sinking under the weight of this new subject, he declares his resolution of leaving it to some happier Poet. He recapitulates the various perils and hardships of his own life, and, remarking that he has ever been unfortunate, and that all his labours are unrewarded, he consoles himself with the reflection, that
honour

honour consists not in the possession of rewards, but in the consciousness of having deserved them. He concludes with a pious resolution to withdraw himself from the vain pursuits of the world, and to devote himself to God.

N O T E X I. V E R S E 280.

At once the Bard of Glory and of Love.] The Epic powers of Camoens have received their due honour in our language, by the elegant and spirited translation of Mr. Mickle; but our country is still a stranger to the lighter graces and pathetic sweetness of his shorter compositions. These, as they are illustrated by the Spanish notes of his indefatigable Commentator, *Manuel de Faria*, amount to two volumes in folio. I shall present the reader with a specimen of his Sonnets, for which he is celebrated as the rival of Petrarch. Of the three translations which follow, I am indebted for the two first to an ingenious friend, from whom the public may wish me to have received more extensive obligations of a similar nature. It may be proper to add, that the first Sonnet of Camoens, like that of Petrarch, is a kind of preface to the amorous poetry of its author.

SONETO I.

EM quanto quis Fortuna que tivesse
 Esperança de algum contentamento,
 O gosto de hum suave pensamento
 Me fez que seus effeytos escrevesse.
 Porèm temendo Amor que aviso desse
 Minha escriptura a algum juizo isento,
 Escureccome o engenho co' o tormento,
 Para que seus enganos não dissesse
 O vós, que amor obriga a ser fogeitos
 A diversas vontades ! quando lerdos
 Num breve livro casos tão diversos ;
 Verdades puras são, & não defeitos.
 Entendey que segundo o amor tiverdes,
 Tircis o entendimento de meus versos.

SONETO XIX.

ALMA minha gentil, que te partiste
 Tão cedo desta vida descontente,
 Repousa lá no ceo eternamente,
 E viva eu cá na terra sempre triste.
 Se lá no affento etereo, onde subiste,
 Memoria desta vida se consente,
 Não te esqueças de aquelle amor ardente
 Que já nos olhos meus tão puro viste.
 E se vires que póde merccerte
 Algũa cousa a dor queme ficou
 Da magoa, sem remedio, de perderte,
 Roga a Deos que teus annos encurtou,
 Que tão cedo de cá me leve a verte,
 Quão cedo de meus olhos te levou.

S O N N E T I.

WHILE on my head kind Fortune deign'd to pour
 Her lavish boons, and through my willing soul
 Made tides of extasy and pleasure roll,
 I sung the raptures of each passing hour.
 But Love, who heard me praise the golden shower,
 Resolv'd my fond presumption to controul;
 And painful darkness o'er my spirit stole,
 Left I should dare to tell his treacherous power.
 O ye, whom his hard yoke compels to bend
 To others' will, if in my various lay
 Sad plaints ye find, and fears, and cruel wrong,
 To suffering nature and to truth attend;
 For in the measure ye have felt his sway,
 Your sympathizing hearts will feel my song.

S O N N E T XIX.

ON THE DEATH OF THE POET'S MISTRESS,
 DONNA CATALINA DE ATAIDE,
 WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY.

GO, gentle spirit! now supremely blest,
 From scenes of pain and struggling virtue go:
 From thy immortal seat of heavenly rest
 Behold us lingering in a world of woe!
 And if beyond the grave, to saints above,
 Fond memory still the transient past portrays,
 Blame not the ardor of my constant love,
 Which in these longing eyes was wont to blaze.
 But if from virtue's source my sorrows rise,
 For the sad loss I never can repair,
 Be thine to justify my endless sighs,
 And to the Throne of Grace prefer thy prayer,
 That Heaven, who made thy span of life so brief,
 May shorten mine, and give my soul relief.

SONETO LXXII.

QUANDO de minhas magoas a comprida
 Maginação os olhos me adormece,
 Em sonhos aquella alma me aparece
 Que para mi foy sonho nesta vida.
 Lá numa soidade, onde estendida
 A vista por o campo desfallece,
 Corro apos ella ; & ella entao parece
 Que maes de mi se alonga, compelida,
 Brado : Não me fujays, sombra benina.
 Ella (os olhos em mi c'hum brado pejo,
 Como quem diz, que ja não pode fêr)
 Torna a fugirme : torno a bradar ; dina :
 E antes q acabe em mene, acordo, & vejo
 Que nem hum breve engano posso ter.

The Spanish Commentator of Camoens considers this vision as the most exquisite Sonnet of his author, and affirms that it is superior to the much longer poem of Petrarch's, on a similar idea. It may amuse a curious reader to compare both Camoens and Petrarch, on this occasion, with Milton, who has also written a Sonnet on the same subject. The Commentator Faria has a very pleasant remark on this species of composition. He vindicates the dignity of the amorous Sonnet, by producing an alphabetical list of two hundred great Poets, who have thus complimented the object of their affection ; and he very gravely introduces Achilles as the leader of this choir, for having celebrated Briseis. If the Sonnets of the Portuguese Poet are worthy of attention, his Elegies are perhaps still more so, as they illustrate many particulars of his interesting life, which ended in 1579, under the most cruel circumstances of neglect and poverty.

Portugal has produced no less than fourteen Epic poems ; twelve in
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SONNET LXXII.

WHILE prest with woes from which it cannot flee,
 My fancy sinks, and slumber seals my eyes,
 Her spirit hastens in my dreams to rise,
 Who was in life but as a dream to me.
 O'er a drear waste, so wide no eye can see
 How far its sense-evading limit lies,
 I follow her quick step; but ah! she flies!
 Our distance widening by stern Fate's decree.
 Fly not from me, kind shadow! I exclaim:
 She, with fix'd eyes, that her soft thoughts reveal,
 And seem to say, "Forbear thy fond design!"
 Still flies:—I call her; but her half-form'd name
 Dies on my falt'ring tongue.—I wake, and feel
 Not e'en one short delusion may be mine.

her own language, and two in that of Spain. At the head of these stands the *Lusiad* of Camoens. The *Malaca Conquistada* of Francisco de Sa' de Meneses—and the *Ulysses*, or *Lisboa Edificada*, of Gabriel Pereira de Castro, are two of the most eminent among its successors.—For a list of the Portuguese Epic Poets, and for an elegant copy of the *Malaca Conquistada*, I am indebted to the very liberal politeness of the Chevalier de Pinto, the Ambassador of Portugal.

NOTE XII. VERSE 287.

Where Eulogy, with one eternal smile.] Though a vain insipidity may be considered as the general characteristic of the French *Eloges*, it is but just to remark, that several of these performances are an honour to the country which produced them; and particularly the little volume of *Eloges* lately published by Mr. D'Alembert. This agreeable Encomiast
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has varied and enlivened the tone of panegyric by the most happy mixture of amusing anecdote, judicious criticism, and philosophical precept: we may justly say of him, what he himself has said of his predecessor Fontenelle: Il a solidement assuré sa gloire . . . par ces Eloges si intéressans, pleins d'une raison si fine et si profonde, qui font aimer et respecter les lettres, qui inspirent aux génies naissans la plus noble emulation, et qui feront passer le nom de l'auteur à la postérité, avec celui de la compagnie célèbre dont il a été le digne organe, et des grands hommes dont il s'est rendu l'égal en devenant leur panégyriste.

D'Alembert, *Eloge de la Motte*, p. 279.

NOTE XIII. VERSE 302.

No great Examples rise, but many a Rule.] Before the appearance of Bossu's celebrated treatise on Epic poetry, the French had a similar work written in Latin. The learned Jesuit Mambrun published, in 1652, a quarto volume, entitled, *Dissertatio Peripatetica de Epico Carmine*. His Dissertation is founded on the principles of Aristotle, whom he considers as infallible authority; and he introduces the Greek Philosopher to decide the following very curious question, which he argues with becoming gravity, Whether the action of a woman can be sufficiently splendid to prove a proper subject for an Epic poem.—Having reasoned on this delicate point, with more learning than gallantry, he thus concludes the debate: *Congruenter magis finem huic quæstioni ponere non licet, quam verbis Aristotelis capite 15 Poeticæ, ubi de moribus disputat, Δεύτερον δε, τα αρμεττοντα. Εστι γαρ ανδρειον μεν το ηθος, αλλ' οχι αρμεττον γυναικι, το ανδρειον η δεινν η ελπι.*—id est, secunda proprietas morum est, ut sint congruentes, ut esse fortem mos est aliquis; at non congruit mulieri fortem esse aut terribilem ut vertit Riccobonus, vel *prudentem* ut Pacius. The latter interpretation of the word *δεινν* would render the decision of these Philosophers very severe indeed on the Female character, by supposing it incapable of displaying both fortitude and prudence.—The Fair Sex have found an advocate, on this occasion, in a French Epic Poet. The famous Chapelain, in the preface to his unfortunate Pucelle, has very warmly attacked these ungallant maxims of Mambrun and Aristotle. In speaking of certain critics, who had censured the choice of his subject, before the publication of his poem, he says, *Ceux-cy, jurant sur le texte d'Aristote,*

ristote, maintiennent que la femme est une erreur de la nature, qui ayant toujours intention de faire un homme, s'arreste souvent en chemin, et se voit contrainte, par la résistance de la matiere, de laisser son dessein imparfait. Ils tiennent la force corporelle tellement necessaire, dans la composition d'un heros, que quand il n'y auroit autre defect à reprocher à la femme, ils luy en refuseroient le nom, pour cela seulement, qu'elle n'a pas la vigueur d'un Athlete, et que la mollesse de sa complexion l'empesche de pouvoir durer au travail. Ils n'estiment ce Sexe capable d'aucune pensée heroique, dans la creance que l'esprit suit le temperament du corps, et que, dans le corps de la femme, l'esprit ne peut rien concevoir, qui ne se sente de sa foiblesse. — — — Ces Messieurs me pardonneront, toutefois, si je leur dis qu'ils ne considerent pas trop bien quelle est la nature de la vertu heroique, qu'ils en definissent l'essence, par un de ses moindres accidens, et qu'ils en font plutost une vertu brutale, qu'une vertu divine. — — — Ils se devoient souvenir que cette vertu n'a presque rien à faire avec le corps, et qu'elle consiste, non dans les efforts d'un Milon de Crotone, où l'esprit n'a aucune part, mais en ceux des ames nées pour les grandes choses ; quand par une ardeur plusqu'humaine, elles s'elevant audeffus d'elles-mesmes ; qu'elles forment quelque dessein, dont l'utilité est aussi grande que la difficulté, et qu'elles choisissent les moyens de l'executer avec constance et hauteur de courage. Pour prevenus qu'ils soient en faveurs des hommes, je ne pense pas qu'ils voulussent attribuer à leur ame un seul avantage, auquel l'ame de la femme ne pust aspirer, ni faire deux especes des deux sexes, desquels la raison de tous les sages n'a fait qu'une jusqu'icy—je ne croy pas non plus qu'ils imaginent que les vertus morales ayent leur siege ailleurs, que dans la volonté, ou dans l'entendement. Mais si elles y ont leur siege, et si l'on ne peut dire que ces deux facultés soient autres, dans l'ame de la femme que dans l'ame de l'homme, ils ne peuvent, sans absurdité, accorder une de ces vertus à l'homme, et ne l'accorder pas à la femme. En effet, cette belle pensée d'Aristote qui a donné occasion à leur erreur, est si peu physique, qu'elle fait plus de tort à la philosophie du Lycée, qu'elle n'appuye l'opinion de ceux que nous combattons." Chapelain then enters into an historical defence of Female dignity, and opposes the authority of Plato to that of Aristotle, concerning the propriety of woman's ever appearing on the great theatre of active life. Happy had he sup-

ported the Female cause as forcibly, in the execution of his poem, as in the arguments of his preface: but Chapelain was unfortunately one of the many examples, which every country affords, that the most perfect union of virtue and erudition is utterly insufficient to form a Poet; and, as he had the ill fate to be persecuted by the pitiless rigour of Boileau, his inharmonious poem can never sink into a desirable oblivion. The treatise of Mambrun seems to have excited, among the French, an eagerness to distinguish themselves in the field of Epic poetry; for several Epic poems were published in France in a few years after that work appeared; but most of them, and particularly those on scriptural subjects, were hardly ever known to exist.

Le Jonas inconnu sèche dans la poussière,
 Le David imprimé n'a point vu la lumière,
 Le Moïse commence à moisir par les bords.

BOILEAU, Sat. ix.

The Alaric of Scudery, and the Clovis of Desmarests, can scarce be reckoned more fortunate; but in this band of unsuccessful Epic writers, there was one Poet, of whom even the severe Boileau could not allow himself to speak ill; this was Le Moine, the author of *St. Louis*. The Satirist being asked, why he had never mentioned the poetry of Le Moine? replied with the two following verses, parodied from Corneille,

Il s'est trop élevé pour en dire du mal,
 Il s'est trop égaré pour en dire du bien.

The judicious and candid Heyne has bestowed considerable applause on Le Moine, in one of his notes to the 6th book of Virgil, where he examines the different methods by which the Epic Poets have introduced their various pictures of futurity. From his account, Le Moine excels in this article. I can speak only from the opinion of this learned Critic, for the neglected French Poet is become so rare, that I have sought in vain for a copy of his work.—The number of obscure Epic writers in France is very trifling, compared to those which Italy has produced; the Italians have been indefatigable in this species of composition, and, as if they had resolved to leave no Hero unsung, their celebrated Novelist, Giral di

Cinthio has written an Epic poem, in twenty-six cantos, on the exploits of Hercules.

NOTE XIV. VERSE 304.

Keen Boileau shall not want his proper praise.] Nicolas Boileau Despreaux was born in or near Paris, for it is a contested point, on the first of November 1636, and died in March 1711 of a dropsy, the very disease which terminated the life of his English rival. The *Lutrin* of Boileau, still considered by some French Critics of the present time as the best poem to which France has given birth, was first published in 1674. It is with great reason and justice that Voltaire confesses the *Lutrin* inferior to the *Rape of the Lock*. Few Poets can be so properly compared as Pope and Boileau; and, wherever their writings will admit of comparison, we may, without any national partiality, adjudge the superiority to the English Bard. These two great authors resembled each other as much in the integrity of their lives, as in the subjects and execution of their several compositions. There are two actions recorded of Boileau, which sufficiently prove that the inexorable Satirist had a most generous and friendly heart; when Patru, the celebrated Advocate, who was ruined by his passion for literature, found himself under the painful necessity of selling his expensive library, and had almost agreed to part with it for a moderate sum, Boileau gave him a much superior price; and, after paying the money, added this condition to the purchase, that Patru should retain, during his life, the possession of the books. The succeeding instance of the Poet's generosity is yet nobler:—when it was rumoured at court that the King intended to retrench the pension of Corneille, Boileau hastened to Madame de Montespan, and said, that his Sovereign, equitable as he was, could not, without injustice, grant a pension to an author like himself, just ascending Parnassus, and take it from Corneille, who had so long been seated on the summit; that he entreated her, for the honour of the King, to prevail on his Majesty rather to strike off *his* pension, than to withdraw that reward from a man whose title to it was incomparably greater; and that he should more easily console himself under the loss of that distinction, than under the affliction of seeing it taken away from such a Poet as Corneille. This magnanimous application had the success which it deserved, and it

appears the more noble, when we recollect that the rival of Corneille was the intimate friend of Boileau.

The long and unreserved intercourse which subsisted between our Poet and Racine was highly beneficial and honourable to both. The dying farewell of the latter is the most expressive eulogy on the private character of Boileau: Je regarde comme un bonheur pour moi de mourir avant vous, said the tender Racine, in taking a final leave of his faithful and generous friend.

NOTE XV. VERSE 313.

Nor, gentle Gresset, shall thy sprightly rhyme.] This elegant and amiable writer was born at Amiens, and educated in the society of the Jesuits, to whom he has paid a grateful compliment in bidding them adieu. At the age of twenty-six he published his *Ver-vert*, a poem in four cantos, which commemorates

La cause infortunée
D'un Perroquet non moins brillant qu'Enée:
Non moins dévot, plus malheureux que lui.

Voltaire has spoken invidiously of this delightful performance; but a spirited French Critic has very justly vindicated the merits of Gresset in the following remark:—*Le Ver-vert* sera toujours un poëme charmant et inimitable, sans souiller sa plume par l'impiété et la licence qui déshonorent celle de l'auteur de *La Pucelle*, le Poëte a su y répandre un agrément, une fraîcheur et une vivacité de coloris, qui le rendent aussi piquant dans les détails, qu'il est riche et ingénieux dans la fiction. On placera toujours cet agreable badinage parmi les productions originales, propres à faire aimer des étrangers la gaieté Française en écartant toute mauvaise idée de nos mœurs.

NOTE XVI. VERSE 325.

See lovely Boccage, in ambition strong.] Madame du Boccage is known to the English reader as the correspondent of Lord Chesterfield. This ingenious and spirited Lady has written three poems of the Epic kind—*Le Paradis Terrestre*, in six cantos, from Milton; *La Mort d'Abel*, in five cantos,

cantos, from Gesner; and a more original composition, in ten cantos, on the exploits of Columbus. I have alluded to a passage in the last poem, where Zama, the daughter of an Indian Chief, is thus described :

Comme Eve, elle étoit nue ; une égale innocence
L'offre aux regards sans honte, et voile ses appas ;
Les Graces qu'elle ignore accompagnent ses pas,
Et pour tout vêtement, en formant sa parure,
D'un plumage azuré couvrirent sa ceinture.

The works of this elegant female Poet contain an animated version of Pope's Temple of Fame. And she has added to her poetry an account of her travels through England, Holland, and Italy, in a series of entertaining letters, addressed to Madame du Perron, her sister.

N O T E X V I I . V E R S E 3 4 4 .

To swell the glory of her great Voltaire.] Though the *Henriade* has been frequently reprinted, and the partizans of Voltaire have endeavoured to make it a national point of honour to support its reputation, it seems at length to be sinking under that neglect and oblivion, which never fail to overtake every feeble offspring of the Epic Muse. Several of our most eminent Critics have attacked this performance with peculiar severity, and some have condemned it on the most opposite principles, merely because it does not coincide with their respective systems. Their sentence has been passed only in short and incidental remarks ; but a French writer, inflamed by personal animosity against Voltaire, has raised three octavo volumes on the defects of this single poem. Mr. Clement, in his “ *Entretiens sur le Poëme Epique relativement à la Henriade,*” has endeavoured to prove it utterly deficient in all the essential points of Epic poetry ;—in the structure of its general plan, in the conduct of its various parts, in sentiment, in character, in style. His work indeed displays an acrimonious detestation of the Poet whom he examines ; and perhaps there is hardly any human composition which could support the scrutiny of so rigid an inquisitor : the *Henriade* is utterly unequal to it ; for in many articles we are obliged to confess, that the justice of the Critic is not inferior to his severity. He discovers, in his dissection of the

Poem, the skill of an anatomist, with the malignity of an assassin. If any thing can deserve such rigorous treatment, it is certainly the artifice of Voltaire, who, in his Essay on Epic Poetry, has attempted, with much ingenuity, to sink the reputation of all the great Epic Writers, that he might raise himself to their level; an attempt in which no author can ultimately succeed; for, as D'Alembert has admirably remarked on a different occasion, *Le public laissera l'amour propre de chaque écrivain faire son plaidoyer, rira de leurs efforts, non de génie, mais de raisonnement, pour hausser leur place, et finira par mettre chacun à la sienne.*

NOTE XVIII. VERSE 475.

And, shrouded in a mist of moral spleen.] It seems to be the peculiar infelicity of Pope, that his moral virtues have had a tendency to diminish his poetical reputation. Possessing a benevolent spirit, and wishing to make the art, to which he devoted his life, as serviceable as he could to the great interests of mankind, he soon quitted the higher regions of poetry, for the more level, and more frequented field of Ethics and of Satire. He declares, with a noble pride arising from the probity of his intention,

That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to truth, and moraliz'd his song.

The severity of Criticism has from hence inferred, that his imagination was inferior to the other faculties of his mind, and that he possessed not that vigour of genius which might enable him to rank with our more sublime and pathetic Bards. This inference appears to me extremely defective both in candour and in reason; it would surely be more generous, and I will venture to add, more just, to assign very different causes for his having latterly applied himself to moral and satyric composition. If his preceding poems displayed only a moderate portion of fancy and of tenderness, we might indeed very fairly conjecture, that he quitted the kind of poetry, where these qualities are particularly required, because Nature directed him to shine only as the Poet of reason.—But his earlier productions will authorize an opposite conclusion. At an age when few authors have produced any capital work, Pope gave the world two poems,

one the offspring of imagination, and the other of sensibility, which will ever stand at the head of the two poetical classes to which they belong : his *Rape of the Lock*, and his *Eloise*, have nothing to fear from any rivals, either of past or of future time. When a writer has displayed such early proofs of exquisite fancy, and of tender enthusiasm, those great constituents of the real Poet, ought we not to regret that he did not give a greater scope and freer exercise to these qualities, rather than to assert that he did not possess them in a superlative degree ? Why then, it may be asked, did he confine himself to compositions in which these have little share ? The life and character of Pope will perfectly explain the reasons, why he did not always follow the higher suggestions of his own natural genius. He had entertained an opinion, that by stooping to truth, and employing his talents on the vices and follies of the passing time, he should be most able to benefit mankind. The idea was perhaps ill-founded, but his conduct in consequence of it was certainly noble. Its effects however were most unhappy ; for it took from him all his enjoyment of life, and may injure, in some degree, his immortal reputation : by suffering his thoughts to dwell too much on knaves and fools, he fell into the splenetic delusion, that the world is nothing but a compound of vice and folly ; and from hence he has been reproached for supposing that all human merit was confined to himself, and to a few of his most intimate correspondents.

There was an amiable peculiarity in the character of Pope, which had great influence both on his conduct and composition—he embraced the sentiments of those he loved with a kind of superstitious regard ; his imagination and his judgment were perpetually the dupes of an affectionate heart : it was this which led him, at the request of his idol Bolingbroke, to write a sublime poem on metaphysical ideas which he did not perfectly comprehend ; it was this which urged him almost to quarrel with Mr. Allen, in compliance with the caprices of a female friend ; it was this which induced him, in the warmth of gratitude, to follow the absurd hints of Warburton with all the blindness of infatuated affection. Whoever examines the life and writings of Pope with a minute and unprejudiced attention, will find that his excellencies, both as a Poet and a Man, were peculiarly his own ; and that his failings were chiefly owing to the ill judgment, or the artifice, of his real and pretended

tended friends. The lavish applause and the advice of his favourite Atterbury, were perhaps the cause of his preserving the famous character of Addison, which, finely written as it is, all the lovers of Pope must wish him to have suppressed. Few of his friends had integrity or frankness sufficient to persuade him, that his satires would destroy the tranquillity of his life, and cloud the lustre of his fame: yet, to the honour of Lyttelton, be it remembered, that he suggested such ideas to the Poet, in the verses which he wrote to him from Rome, with all the becoming zeal of enlightened friendship:

No more let meaner Satire dim the rays
That flow majestic from thy nobler bays!
In all the flowery paths of Pindus stray,
But shun that thorny, that unpleasing way!
Nor, when each soft, engaging Muse is thine,
Address the least attractive of the Nine!

This generous admonition did not indeed produce its intended effect, for other counsellors had given a different bias to the mind of the Poet, and the malignity of his enemies had exasperated his temper; yet he afterwards turned his thoughts towards the composition of a national-Epic poem, and possibly in consequence of the hint which this Epistle of Lyttelton contains. The intention was formed too late, for it arose in his decline of life. Had he possessed health and leisure to execute such a work, I am persuaded it would have proved a glorious acquisition to the literature of our country: the subject indeed which he had chosen must be allowed to have an unpromising appearance; but the opinion of Addison concerning his *Sylphs*, which was surely honest, and not invidious, may teach us hardly ever to decide against the intended works of a superior genius. Yet in all the Arts, we are perpetually tempted to pronounce such decisions. I have frequently condemned subjects which my friend Romney had selected for the pencil; but in the sequel, my opinion only proved that I was near-sighted in those regions of imagination, where his keener eyes commanded all the prospect.

N O T E S

T O T H E

F O U R T H E P I S T L E.

N O T E I. VERSE 103.

PROCEED, ye Sisters of the tuneful Shell.] For the advice which I have thus ventured to give such of my fair readers as have a talent for poetry, I shall produce them a much higher poetical authority. In the age of Petrarch, an Italian Lady, named Giustina Perrot, was desirous of distinguishing herself by this pleasing accomplishment; but the remarks of the world, which represented it as improper for her sex, discouraged her so far, that she was almost tempted to relinquish her favourite pursuit. In her doubts on this point, she consulted the celebrated Poet of her country in an elegant Sonnet; and received his answer on the interesting subject in the same poetical form. I shall add the two Sonnets, with an imitation of each.

IO vorrei pur drizzar queste mie piume
 Colà, Signor, dove il desio n'invita,
 E dopo morte rimaner' in vita
 Col chiaro di virtute inclyto lume:
 Ma' volgo inerte, che dal rio costume
 Vinto, ha d' ogni suo ben la via smarrita,
 Come degna di biasmo ogn' hor m' addita
 Ch' ir tenti d' Elicon al sacro fiume.
 All ago, al fuso, piu ch' al lauro, o al mirto,
 Come che qui non sia la gloria mia,
 Vuol ch' habbia sempre questa mente intesa.
 Dimmi tu hormai, che per piu dritta via
 A Parnasso t' en vai, nobile spirto,
 Dovrò dunque lasciar sì degna impresa?

LA gola, e' l fonno, e l' oziose piume
 Hanno del mondo ogni virtù sbandita,
 Ond' è dal corso suo quasi smarrita
 Nostra natura vinta dal costume:
 Ed è sì spento ogni benigno lume
 Del ciel, per cui s' informa umana vita,
 Che per cosa mirabile s' addita
 Chi vuol far d' Elicon nascer fiume.
 Qual vaghezza di lauro, qual di mirto?
 Povera e ruda vai filosofia,
 Dice la turba al vil guadagno intesa.
 Pochi compagni avrai per l'altra via;
 Tanto ti prego più, gentile spirto,
 Non lasciar la magnanima tua impresa!

THE SONNET OF GIUSTINA TO PETRARCH.

GLADLY would I exchange inglorious ease
 For future fame, the Poet's fond desire !
 And still to live, in spite of death, aspire
 By Virtue's light, that darkness cannot seize :
 But, stupified by Custom's blank decrees,
 The idle vulgar, void of liberal fire,
 Bid me, with scorn, from Helicon retire,
 And rudely blame my generous hope to please.
 Distaffs, not laurels, to your sex belong,
 They cry—as honour were beyond our view :
 To such low cares they wish my spirit bent.
 Say thou ! who marchest, 'mid the favor'd few,
 To high Parnassus, with triumphant song,
 Should I abandon such a fair intent ?

THE ANSWER OF PETRARCH.

LUXURIOUS pleasure, and lethargic ease
 Have deaden'd in the world each bright desire :
 Our thoughts no more with Nature's force aspire ;
 Custom's cold powers the drooping fancy seize :
 So lost each light that taught the soul to please,
 Each heavenly spark of life-directing fire,
 That all, who join the Heliconian choir,
 Are frantic deem'd by Folly's dull decrees.
 What charms, what worth to Laurel-wreaths belong ?
 Naked and poor Philosophy we view,
 Exclaims the crowd, on sordid gain intent.—
 Associates in thy path thou'lt find but few ;
 The more, I pray thee, Nymph of graceful song,
 Indulge thy spirit in its noble bent !

NOTE II. VERSE 210.

As wounded Learning blushes to recite!] Milton sold the copy of *Paradise Lost* for the sum of five pounds, on the condition of receiving fifteen pounds more at three subsequent periods, to be regulated by the sale of the Poem.—For the ceiling at Whitehall, Rubens received three thousand pounds.

NOTE III. VERSE 298.

Receive the Laurel from Imperial Charles!] Ariosto is said to have been publicly crowned with laurel at Mantua, by the Emperor Charles the Vth, towards the end of the year 1532. This fact has been disputed by various writers, but it seems to be sufficiently established by the researches of Mazzuchelli.

The custom of crowning Poets with laurel is almost as ancient as poetry itself, says the Abbé du Resnel, in his *Recherches sur les Poetes couronnez*, a work which contains but scanty information on this curious topic. Petrarch is generally supposed to have revived this ancient solemnity, which had been abolished as a pagan institution in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius. It appears however, from two passages in the writings of Boccacio, that Dante had entertained serious thoughts of this honourable distinction, which his exile precluded him from receiving, as he chose, says his Biographer, to be crown'd only in his native city.

An amusing volume might be written on the honours which have been paid to Poets in different ages, and in various parts of the world. It is remarkable, that the most unpolished nations have been the most lavish in rewarding their Bards. There are two instances on record, in which poetical talents have raised their possessors even to sovereign dominion. The Scythians chose the Poet Thamyras for their king, though he was not a native of their country, *ἐπὶ ταστέον ἦκε κίθαριν ὀδῶν, ὡς καὶ βασιλεὺς σφῶν, καί περ ἐπὶ γούτων αὐτῶν, Σκυθίας ποιητὰς αὐτοῦ*. Hist. Poet. Script. Edit. Gale, p. 250. Saxo Grammaticus begins the sixth book of his History by relating, that the Danes bestowed their vacant diadem on the Poet Hiarnus, as a reward for his having composed the best epitaph on their deceased sovereign Frothe. From the four Latin verses which the Historian has given us, as a translation

translation of this extraordinary epitaph, we may venture to affirm, that the poetical monarch obtain'd his crown on very easy conditions.

NOTE IV. VERSE 314.

For him her fountains gush with golden streams.] Of the great wealth which flowed into the hands of this extraordinary Poet, his friend and biographer Montalvan has given a particular account. This author concludes that Lope de Vega gained by his dramatic works alone a sum nearly equal to 20,000 pounds sterling; the revenue arising from the posts he held, and from his pension, was very considerable. His opulence was much increased by the most splendid instances of private liberality. He received many costly presents from various characters to whom he was personally unknown; and he was himself heard to say, in speaking of his generous patron, that the Duke of Sessa alone had given him, at different periods of his life, sums almost amounting to six thousand pounds.

It must be confessed, that the noble patrons of English poetry have not equalled this example of Spanish munificence, even if we admit the truth of our traditionary anecdotes concerning the generosity of Lord Southampton to Shakespeare, and of Sir Philip Sidney to Spenser. Considering the liberality for which our nation is so justly celebrated, it is remarkable, that not a single English Poet appears to have been enriched by our monarchs: yet Spenser had every claim to the bounty of Elizabeth; he sung her praises in a strain which might gratify her pride; and of all who have flattered the great, he may justly be considered as the most worthy of reward. His song was the tribute of his heart as well as of his fancy, and the sex of his idol may be said to purify his incense from all the offensive particles of servile adulation. The neglect which he experienced from the vain, imperious, and ungrateful Elizabeth, appears the more striking, when we recollect, that her lovely rival, the beautiful and unfortunate Queen of Scots, signalized her superior generosity by a magnificent present of plate to the French Poet Ronfard. This neglected Bard was once the darling of France, and perhaps equalled Lope de Vega in the honours which he received: his sovereign, Charles the Ninth, composed some elegant verses in his praise, and the city of Toulouse presented him with a Minerva of massive silver.

If our princes and nobles have not equalled those of other kingdoms in liberality to the great Poets of their country, England may yet boast the name of a private gentleman, who discovered in this respect a most princely spirit ; no nation, either ancient or modern, can produce an example of munificence more truly noble than the annual gratuity which Akenfide received from Mr. Dyson ; a tribute of generous and affectionate admiration, endeared to its worthy possessor by every consideration which could make it honourable both to himself and to his patron !

It has been lately lamented by an elegant and accomplished writer, who had too much reason for the complaint, that “ the profession “ of Literature, by far the most laborious of any, leads to no real benefit.” Experience undoubtedly proves, that it has a general tendency to impoverish its votaries ; and the legislators of every country would act perhaps a wise, at all events an honourable part, if they corrected this tendency, by establishing public emoluments for such as eminently distinguish themselves in the various branches of science. It is surely possible to form such an establishment, which, without proving a national burthen, might aggrandize the literary glory of the nation, by preserving her men of letters from the evils so frequently connected with their pursuits, by securing, to those who deserve it, the possession of ease and honour, without damping their emulation, or destroying their independence.

N O T E S

TO THE

F I F T H E P I S T L E.

NOTE I. VERSE 76.

THE loose Petronius gave the maxim birth.] Aristotle has said but little, in his Poetics, concerning that weighty point, which has so much employed and embarrassed the modern Critics—the machinery of the Epic poem; and the little which he has said might rather furnish an argument for its exclusion, than justify its use. But Rome, in her most degenerate days, produced a writer, to whose authority, contemptible as it is, most frequent appeals have been made in this curious literary question. In almost every modern author who has touched, however slightly, on Epic poetry, we may find at least some part of the following sentence from Petronius Arbiter: — *Ecce, belli civilis ingens opus quisquis attigerit, nisi plenus litteris, sub onere labetur. Non enim res gestæ versibus comprehendendæ sunt, quod longe melius historici faciunt; sed per ambages, deorumque ministeria, & fabulosum sententiarum tormentum præcipitandus est liber spiritus; ut potius furentis animi vaticinatio appareat, quam religiosæ orationis sub testibus fides.*

These remarks on the necessity of celestial agents, were evidently made to depreciate the *Pharsalia* of Lucan; and Petronius may be called a fair Critic, as Pope said of Milbourne, on his opposition to Dryden, because he produces his own poetry in contrast to that which he condemns. His specimen of the manner in which he thought an Epic poem should be conducted, sufficiently proves the absurdity of his criticism;

ticifin; for how infipid is the fable in thofe verfes which he has oppofed to the Pharfalia, when compared to the firft book of Lucan! Yet the Epic compofition of Petronius has not wanted admirers: a Dutch Commentator is bold enough to fay, that he prefers this fingle rhapsody to three hundred volumes of fuch poetry as Lucan's: an opinion which can only lead us to exclaim with Boileau,

Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire.

If men of letters, in the age of Lucan, differed in their sentiments concerning machinery, the great changes that have fince happened in the world, and the difquifitions which have appeared on the fubject, are very far from having reconciled the judgment of modern writers on this important article. Two eminent Critics of the prefent time have delivered opinions on this topic fo fingularly oppofite to each other, that I fhall tranfcribe them both.

“ In a theatrical entertainment, which employs both the eye and the
 “ ear, it would be a grofs absurdity to introduce upon the ftage fuperior
 “ Beings in a vifible fhape. There is not place for fuch objection in an
 “ Epic poem; and Boileau, with many other Critics, declares ftrongly
 “ for that fort of machinery in an Epic poem. But waving authority,
 “ which is apt to impofe upon the judgment, let us draw what light we
 “ can from reafon. I begin with a preliminary remark, that this mat-
 “ ter is but indiftinctly handled by Critics. The poetical privilege of
 “ animating infenfible objects for enlivening a defcription, is very differ-
 “ ent from what is termed *machinery*, where deities, angels, devils, or
 “ other fupernatural powers, are introduced as real perfonages, mixing
 “ in the action, and contributing to the catastrophe; and yet thefe two
 “ things are constantly jumbled together in the reafoning. The former
 “ is founded on a natural principle; but can the latter claim the fame
 “ authority? So far from it, that nothing is more unnatural. Its
 “ effects at the fame time are deplorable. Firft, it gives an air of
 “ fiction to the whole, and prevents that impreffion of reality which is
 “ requifite to intereft our affections, and to move our paffions; which
 “ of itfelf is fufficient to explode machinery, whatever entertainment it
 “ may afford to readers of a fantaftic tafte or irregular imagination.

“ And

“ And next, were it possible, by disguising the fiction, to delude us into
 “ a notion of reality, which I think can hardly be, an insuperable objec-
 “ tion would still remain, which is, that the aim or end of an Epic
 “ poem can never be attained in any perfection where machinery is in-
 “ troduced; for an evident reason, that virtuous emotions cannot be
 “ raised successfully, but by the actions of those who are endued with
 “ passions and affections like our own, that is, by human actions: and
 “ as for moral instruction, it is clear that none can be drawn from
 “ Beings who act not upon the same principles with us. Homer, it is
 “ true, introduces the Gods into his fable; but the religion of his coun-
 “ try authorized that liberty; it being an article in the Grecian creed,
 “ that the Gods often interpose visibly and bodily in human affairs. I
 “ must, however, observe, that Homer’s Deities do no honour to his
 “ poems. Fictions that transgress the bounds of nature seldom have a
 “ good effect; they may inflame the imagination for a moment, but
 “ will not be relished by any person of a correct taste. They may be of
 “ some use to the lower rank of writers; but an author of genius has
 “ much finer materials of nature’s production for elevating his subject,
 “ and making it interesting.—Voltaire, in his Essay upon Epic Poetry,
 “ talking of the Pharsalia, observes judiciously, that the proximity of
 “ time, the notoriety of events, the character of the age, enlightened and
 “ political, joined with the solidity of Lucan’s subject, deprived him of
 “ all liberty of poetical fiction. Is it not amazing, that a Critic who
 “ reasons so justly with respect to others, can be so blind with respect to
 “ himself? Voltaire, not satisfied to enrich his language with images
 “ drawn from invisible and superior Beings, introduces them into the
 “ action. In the sixth canto of the Henriade, St. Louis appears in
 “ person, and terrifies the soldiers; in the seventh canto, St. Louis
 “ sends the God of Sleep to Henry; and in the tenth, the demons of
 “ Discord, Fanaticism, War, &c. assist Aumale in a single combat with
 “ Turenne, and are driven away by a good angel brandishing the sword
 “ of God. To blend such fictitious personages in the same action with
 “ mortals, makes a bad figure at any rate, and is intolerable in a history
 “ so recent as that of Henry IV. This singly is sufficient to make the
 “ Henriade a short-lived poem, were it otherwise possessed of every
 “ beauty.”

Elements of Criticism, vol. ii. p. 389, 4th edition.

“ The Pagan Gods and Gothic Fairies were equally out of credit when Milton wrote. He did well therefore to supply their room with Angels and Devils. If these too should wear out of the popular creed (and they seem in a hopeful way, from the liberty some late Critics have taken with them) I know not what other expedients the Epic Poet might have recourse to; but this I know—the pomp of verse, the energy of description, and even the finest moral paintings, would stand him in no stead. Without *admiration* (which cannot be effected but by the marvellous of celestial intervention, I mean the agency of superior natures really existing, or by the illusion of the fancy taken to be so) no Epic poem can be long-lived. I am not afraid to instance in the *Henriade* itself, which, notwithstanding the elegance of the composition, will in a short time be no more read than the *Gondibert* of Sir W. Davenant, and for the same reason.”

Letters on Chivalry and Romance, Letter X.

I have thus ventured to confront these eminent critical antagonists, that, while they engage and overthrow each other, we may observe the injustice produced by the spirit of systematical criticism, even in authors most respectable for their talents and erudition.—Here is the unfortunate Voltaire placed between two critical fires, which equally destroy him. The *first* Critic asserts that the *Henriade* must be short-lived, because the Poet *has introduced invisible and superior agents*;—the *second* denounces the same fate against it, because *it wants the agency of superior natures*: yet surely every reader of poetry, who is not influenced by any particular system, will readily allow, that if Voltaire had treated his subject with true Epic spirit in all other points, neither the introduction nor the absence of St. Louis could be singly sufficient to plunge the *Henriade* in oblivion. Indeed the learned author, who has spoken in so peremptory a manner concerning the necessity of supernatural agents to preserve the existence of an Epic poem, appears rather unfortunate in the two examples by which he endeavours to support his doctrine; for the Epic poems both of Davenant and Voltaire have sufficient defects to account for any neglect which may be their lot, without considering the article of Machinery.

If I have warmly opposed any decisions of this exalted Critic, it is
from

from a persuasion (in which I may perhaps be mistaken) that *some* of his maxims have a strong tendency to injure an art highly dear to us both ; an art on which his genius and learning have cast *many* rays of pleasing and of useful light.

NOTE II. VERSE 166.

But howling dogs the fancied Orpheus tore.] This anecdote of Neanthus, the son of King Pittacus, is related by Lucian. The curious reader may find it in the second volume of Dr. Francklin's spirited translation of that lively author, page 355 of the quarto edition.

NOTE III. VERSE 276.

And spotless Laurels in that field be won.] The Indian mythology, as it has lately been illustrated in the writings of Mr. Holwell, is finely calculated to answer the purpose of any poetical genius who may wish to introduce new machinery into the serious Epic Poem. Besides the powerful charm of novelty, it would have the advantage of not clashing with our national religion ; for the endeavours of Mr. Holwell to reconcile the ancient and pure doctrine of Bramah with the dispensation of Christ, have so far succeeded, that if his system does not satisfy a theologist, it certainly affords a sufficient basis for the structure of a Poet. In perusing his account of the Indian scripture, every reader of imagination may, I think, perceive, that the Shastah might supply a poetical spirit with as rich a mass of ideal treasure as fancy could wish to work upon.—An Epic Poet, desirous of laying the scene of his action in India, would be more embarrassed to find interesting Heroes than proper Divinities.—Had justice and generosity inspired and guided that English valour, which has signalized itself on the plains of Indostan ; had the arms of our country been employed to deliver the native Indians from the oppressive usurpation of the Mahometan powers ; such exploits would present to the Epic Muse a subject truly noble, and the mythology of the East might enrich it with the most splendid decorations. Whether it be possible or not to find such a subject in the records of our Indian history, I leave the reader to determine.—Our great Historian of the Roman empire has intimated, in a note to the first volume of his immortal work, that “ the wonderful expedition of Odin, which deduces

“ the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might “ supply the noble ground-work of an Epic poem.” The idea is certainly both just and splendid. Had Gray been ever tempted to engage in such a work, he would probably have convinced us, that the Northern mythology has still sufficient power to seize and enchant the imagination, as much in Epic as in Lyric composition.

It may amuse our speculative Critics, to consider how far the *religious Gothic fables* should be introduced or rejected, to render such a performance most interesting to a modern reader. Few judges would agree in their sentiments on the question; and perhaps the great dispute concerning Machinery cannot be fairly adjusted, till some happy genius shall possess ambition and perseverance enough to execute two Epic poems, in the one adopting, and in the other rejecting, supernatural agents; for Reason alone is by no means an infallible conductor in the province of Fancy; and in the poetical as well as the philosophical world, experiment is the surest guide to truth.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

EPISTLE II.

Ver. 3, for *where* read *whence*

— 282, for *Critic* read *Critics*

EPISTLE IV.

Ver. 356, for *keep* read *heap*.

Ver. 372, at the end of the line insert a mark of Interrogation.

ERRATA IN THE NOTES.

Page 133, line 3, for *wore* read *bore*

— 191, — 10, for *Ninus* read *Nisus*

— 201, — 8, for *neglio* read *meglio* — for *giudicio* read *giudicio*

— 208, — 28, for *Aranco* read *Arauco*; and line ult. for *Arancunians* read *Araucanians*.

— 217, &c. for *Lincoxa* read *Linceya*

— 223, line 20, for *Lantaro* read *Lautaro*.—The Reader is desired to correct this name in different pages, as it is repeatedly misprinted.

— 286, line 2, for *was* read *were*



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An essay on epic poetry. main
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